The Saviour King.

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THE SAVIOUR KING

THE SAVIOUR KING

INSTRUCTIONS TO CHILDREN

ON

Old Testament Types and Illustrations

OF THE

Life of our Lord Jesus Christ

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BY

EDWARD COSBORNE

MISSION PRIEST OF S. JOHN EVANGELIST, COWLEY, OXFORD

AUTHOR OF "THE CHILDREN'S SAVIOUR"

WITH OUTLINE ILLUSTRATIONS

London

RIVINGTONS, WATERLOO PLACE

New York

E. & J. B. YOUNG & COMPANY

COOPER UNION, FOURTH AVENUE

MDCCCLXXXVIII

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1886

TN 43.7
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TO THE CHILDREN WHO READ THIS BOOK.

A GREAT many people never read the Old Testament part of the Bible, and of those who read it a great many do not understand it. Indeed, one reason why they do not read it is because they do not understand, and so think there is no good in reading.

I think children are fond of the Old Testament. They like it because of the stories it contains.

But they do not understand any more than the grown-up people. Perhaps they never think that the stories have any particular meaning to them.

It is for this reason that I have written this book. The children, who love the Old Testament stories, will by it be helped to know something of what these stories mean.

Another mistake that grown-up people make, is to think that there is nothing, or very little, about our Lord JESUS CHRIST in the Old Testament. It is not well for children to grow up with such a mistake in their minds. You who read this book will learn that almost every chapter in the Old Testament tells us something about Him. The whole Bible is full of JESUS CHRIST.

Some of you have, perhaps, read another book

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I have written, called "THE CHILDREN'S SAVIOUR," and will want to ask me two or three questions.

Why have you given this book another name, and not called it the second volume of "THE CHILDREN'S SAVIOUR"?

Because it is not a second volume of that; it is a different book altogether.

Because, too, I want you to learn something by the title of the book. It is a beautiful thing to know that JESUS loved us enough to come into the world and be our *Saviour;* but we must also remember that He wants us to serve and obey Him as our *King*. We are not to think only of what we get from Him; we must think of the service His children are to give to Him.

Why have you made this book for the same Sundays as the other book? Why did you not make it for Trinity Season?

Because I wanted to show you that all the life of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, which the Church tells us about on the Sundays from Advent to Trinity, is set before us in the types and figures of the Old Testament. It will be a change to some to have the same lessons from our Lord's life given to them in a different way.

And I think, too, that some will like to use both books—"THE SAVIOUR KING" in the morning, and "THE CHILDREN'S SAVIOUR" in the afternoon.

Are you going to write a book for the Trinity Sundays?

I hope so. I have one more than half done,

but I do not know when I shall get time to finish it. That may be called "THE CHILDREN'S FAITH," and will have lessons for all the rest of the year. Perhaps it will be ready by the time you have read this book.

Now, do you want to ask what has become of Annie, of whom I told you in "THE CHILDREN'S SAVIOUR"? Was she ever found?

Yes, thank GOD! The prayers of a great many children were answered for her. I found her after about three years. She is now a tall, fine young woman. She has never forgotten her church and the teaching she received there, and has always kept her love for JESUS CHRIST. When she was old enough to leave them, she came away from her parents, because she knew she could not lead a good life with them. She lives near her church now, and often comes to see her clergyman, always smiling, and thankful to be, as she says, "at home in the Church again." May GOD'S blessing always rest on her and the children who prayed for her.

POSTSCRIPT.

It was intended to call this book "THE CHILDREN'S KING," but after the greater part of it was in print, it was discovered that another book bearing that title had lately been published: a change was therefore necessary. This will explain the use of the phrase "the Children's King" in several places in the book, where, if the title had originally been as it is now, the words "the Saviour King" would have been used instead.

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THE CHILDREN'S KING

THE PREACHING OF NOAH.

The First Sunday in Advent.

THE PREACHING OF NOAH: AND THE END OF THE WORLD.

GENESIS vi. 12–22. 2 S. PETER iii. 3–14.

ALMIGHTY GOD made the world in which we live more than six thousand years ago. When He made it, it was very good. "GOD saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good."

But GOD's beautiful world did not continue good very long. There is an evil spirit called the Devil, or Satan, and through him the world was spoiled. I think you remember how this was. Satan went into the beautiful garden in which GOD had put Adam and Eve, the first man and woman that He made, and tempted them to do wrong. They listened to him and disobeyed GOD, so sin came into the world. The children of Adam and Eve were like their parents, and they did wrong; and all the people who came after them sinned too. So the world got full of sin and grew worse and worse; it was not like GOD's beautiful, good world any more.

But GOD still loved the world, and He grieved when He saw it so bad. And then He said He would purify it. He would destroy all the evil in

the world, and make it good again. How full of love GOD is!

Now, among all the bad people in the world there was one man who was good, almost the only good man left. His name was Noah. And GOD told him what He was going to do.

But how was GOD going to purify the world? When we have anything that has become soiled, and is, as we say, very dirty, we wash it and it becomes clean again. GOD told Noah that He was going to wash the world. He was going to wash it by sending a great flood of water. Wherever there were wicked people, the flood would go and wash them all off the earth. GOD still loved the world, so He would wash the bad away, and all should be clean and good and beautiful once more.

But if a flood of water came it might wash the good and bad away together. I remember a flood in a little village in the south of England that washed away ten houses in one night. In these houses some of the people were bad and some were good; water does not know the difference. So the great flood which GOD was going to send to wash the world might have washed all away, and left not even the good behind.

GOD did not wish this. So He told Noah that the flood was coming, and what he was to do that he and his family might be saved.

He told him he was to build an Ark, that is, a great ship of wood, large enough to hold him and his family with food for a long time. And it was

to be big enough to hold a great many animals that GOD said he was to take with him, with food for them all. Whatever was in this Ark would be safe, but all else was to be washed away.

Now, GOD told Noah all this a long time before the flood was to come, at least one hundred and twenty years; people lived much longer then than they do now. And did Noah believe Almighty God? Indeed he did; he believed every word, and he did what GOD told him. He began at once to build the Ark.

If you look now at your picture you will see him at work. The tall old man standing by the ship is Noah. Kneeling behind him is one of his sons. He had three sons, and they were all good, and believed as their father believed, and worked with him. They are all working together to build the ship God had told them to build. Near by you can see the axe and other tools which they are using.

There was one thing which must have seemed very strange when they built this Ark. They built it on dry land. There was no flood near, nor any water in which to float it; and, indeed, it would have needed a great deal of water, for it was one of the largest ships that ever was built. I do not think that there ever were more than five or six bigger ones. How strange all this must have seemed to the people who lived around Noah! How they wondered what it all meant! They heard of this man, whom they knew to be a good man, building away all day, and day after day, spending all his

time and labour over this great Ark, and perhaps paying other men to work for him; what could it all mean?

We may be quite sure that some of them would come to see, and stand around, watching him at his work. Of course Noah told them what GOD had said to him. He pointed upward and told them of GOD, and of their own wickedness, and that GOD was going to send a flood to wash the wickedness all away. But they did not believe that—perhaps they did not understand how it could be; and so they came and looked and went away again, and many of them only laughed at Noah for wasting his time, as they thought, so foolishly.

Let us think of some of the different kinds of people who would come. We see three of them in our picture.

Look first at the man standing furthest to the right. What sort of a man does he seem? To me he looks like a very worldly man—that is, a man who thinks a great deal of this world, and lives for it, and I will tell you why.

In our Baptism we promised to "renounce the World, the Flesh, and the Devil." To "renounce the World" does not mean that we are to go out of it, but that we are to give up, not to care for, its pomps and vanities. We are not to think much of the outside show that many people in the world care for. We are not to think that we are better than others; not to wish for more money or finer clothes, that we may appear better off than others.

We are not to wish that people may think a great deal of us and pay us compliments. To do these things would be caring for the world, and not renouncing it, and so we should be worldly.

Now, does not this man look as if he thought a great deal of himself, his money and fine clothes; as if he wished people to admire him? He is a very worldly man.

And so he passes Noah by. He thinks him very foolish to be building a great ship on that fine summer day when there is no sign of any flood, nor any use for the ship when it is done. He enjoys the world as it is, and does not see that it needs any change. Why cannot Noah enjoy it too, and not waste his time working and talking so foolishly? So he goes away.

The second man is seated upon the ground in front of the picture. It is very easy to say what he looks like. He is very fond of good things; he thinks a great deal about eating and drinking. Even while Noah is speaking to him, he cannot keep his eyes from looking at the rich things in his basket. And he is a very lazy fellow too. We can tell that by the way he is sitting down.

We promise in our Baptism to renounce the Flesh, that is, the "sinful lusts of the Flesh," or, as we may say, "the sinful desires of the body." Some of these sinful desires of the body are sloth, or laziness, and being too fond of eating and drinking. The man in our picture does not look as if he had renounced, had given up, these things.

He looks like one who was fond of them; who let his body rule him instead of renouncing it.

We can think how such people may have come out of curiosity to see Noah, but they were much too lazy to take the trouble to build an ark themselves; they were content to eat and drink and let things go on, and wait to see what happened.

The third man is quite different from these. What an unpleasant face he has! He looks as if he were laughing at, ridiculing, all that Noah says. He has made up his mind not to believe a word, but to sneer at and make fun of it all. Who does he make us think of?

Is there not one evil spirit who ridicules and laughs at all that is good? Yes, this is a picture of one who has given himself up to serve the Devil. Instead of renouncing him, he has chosen him to be his master. It is terrible when people do this. They no longer care about anything that is good; they ridicule, they hate it all.

These are some of the different kinds of people who came to see Noah and his work. Some cared only for the world, others lived for themselves, and some had given themselves up to the Devil and sin. And none of them cared to listen to Noah; they liked the world very well, they were too lazy to take any trouble, they would not believe a flood was coming, so they went on just as if GOD had not spoken. But GOD had spoken, and His word came true. The Flood came and washed them all away.

I have told you, in the Address to Children at the beginning of this book, that we are to try and see what the Old Testament Histories we are to read teach us about things that are written in the New Testament, and especially what they teach us about our Lord JESUS CHRIST, the Children's Saviour and the Children's King.

This story of the Flood in the days of Noah teaches us about the end of the world. And this is one of the things that the season of Advent is to lead us to think about.

The world will not last for ever as it is now. Since Almighty GOD washed the world in the days of Noah it has got very wicked again, and it seems to be getting more wicked every day. Some day GOD will come to wash, or purify, His world again. But He will purify it, or make it pure, in a very different way; not by Water, but by *Fire*.

This is quite certain, because GOD has said it, and whatever He says is certainly true. But just as it was in the days of Noah, so it is now. The people then did not believe that the Flood would come. So many people now do not believe that the end will ever come by Fire, or at any rate they live as if they did not believe it.

Yet this will be the end of the world. And every Advent as it comes round tells us that the time is getting nearer. Advent means coming, and GOD will come to make pure His world by Fire.

I wonder if we are like the people who do not

believe? They are of just the same kinds as those who watched Noah.

Some of them are lazy people, children and grown-up people too, who think a good deal of eating and drinking, who only please themselves—who do not trouble to think about GOD and His Word, nor what the end of their life and of the world is going to be.

Others are worldly. They only want to have money and show and pleasure, and they do not like to think that a time is coming when all their money and houses and fine clothes, all the things they care about, will be burnt up.

And then S. Peter tells us that "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming?" A *scoffer* is one who mocks at what is good. Those who give themselves up to sin and laugh at all that is good, these are scoffers, like the men who laughed at Noah.

Oh, children, we must not be like any of these! For the end will come, and the self-indulgent, the worldly, the scoffers, whether they like to think of it or not, will all be taken away; they will all perish when GOD comes to purify His world by Fire.

Now, I am sure that some of you will want to ask, "But won't there be any Ark then, that people who do believe may get into it and be saved from the fire as Noah was from the flood of water?"

Yes, indeed, for GOD is as good now as He was then. Have you never noticed in the Baptismal Service, which you have often heard in Church, that we pray in the very first prayer, that the child to be baptized may be received into the *Ark of Christ's Church?* This is the Ark which GOD has prepared. Not a mere Ark of wood—that would be of no use then; but a spiritual Ark, the Church of the living GOD.

The Church is the Ark of GOD. This will never be destroyed. "I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH." The wicked world, the careless, the worldly, the sinners, will all be swept away, but not the Catholic Church. That will stand for ever, and all who are in it shall be safe.

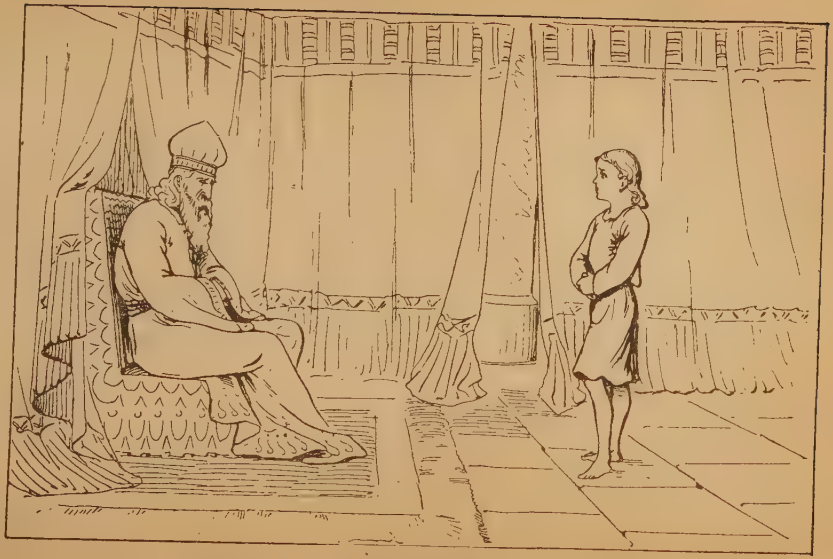
We shall learn more about this another time, but let us learn some things to-day. We must take care that we are not thinking too much about this world and what it can give us. We must not be living to please ourselves, whether in eating or drinking or in any other way. We must be very careful never to disbelieve or ridicule anything GOD has said, but believe all His words, and serve Him truly all the days of our life.

And we must be sure that we have been baptized and received into the Ark of Christ's Church, in which alone we can hope to be quite safe in the day of the Fire.

When the Fire has passed away, GOD will make all things new. He will make a new Heaven and a new Earth. All will then be good, be beautiful;

no pain, no sorrow, no sin—all new, and bright, and pure, and happy.

May He bring all His children to be for ever in that bright new world with Him, the Children's Lord and King.



ELI AND SAMUEL.

The Second Sunday in Advent.

ELI AND SAMUEL: AND JESUS CHRIST PURIFYING HIS CHURCH.

1 Samuel iii. 1–18. S. John ii. 14–17.

When Almighty God brought the Children of Israel out of Egypt He led them through a wilderness, on the way to the land He was going to give them. In this wilderness they had no Church, or, as they would have said, no Temple, in which to worship God. So God told them to make a Tabernacle.

A Temple is built of stone or wood, and stands always in the same place; but a Tabernacle is a tent which can be taken down and carried about. You have all seen the large tents that circuses have; a Tabernacle is something like them.

The Children of Israel made the Tabernacle, and carried it with them wherever they went, and always came to it to worship God. When they came to their own land the Tabernacle was set up in a place called Shiloh, and there it remained until the Temple was built, and there they always went to offer sacrifices to Almighty God.

I think you all must know what the men were

called whose duty it was to offer the people's sacrifices either in the Tabernacle or Temple. They were called Priests, and they had to be always ready to offer the sacrifices and help the people to worship.

Think what a grand thing that was for them! To be Priests of the Most High GOD; to be always in or near His Temple; to be always in His Presence! What good men they ought to have been!

The first priest to the Children of Israel was called Aaron. GOD Himself chose him. After Aaron came his sons, for GOD said as long as the people had priests they must come from the family of Aaron. Some of them were good men, and some of them were very bad.

At the time we are now going to think of, the priest who had the care of the Tabernacle at Shiloh was called Eli, and he had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas.

This Eli was not a good man. He did not really love GOD, and did not care for His service. He only thought of the things of this world. The chief thing he cared for was to make himself and his family rich. He did this by taking for himself the things that the people who came to worship offered to Almighty GOD.

His sons were just as bad as he was. Indeed, we cannot be surprised at this, for if they saw their father covetous and not caring for GOD and His House, it was only natural that they should grow up like him, and do even worse things than he did.

One day GOD sent a man called a Prophet to Eli, to tell him how wrong it was for him to forget, and to let his sons do such bad things without trying to stop them. The Prophet told him that GOD would punish him, that both his sons would die in one day, and that his family would lose all their riches and honour and become beggars; because of their sin. But Eli took no notice of this—perhaps he did not believe it; and they all went on doing just as they had done before. How dreadful to think of!

Among those who lived at Shiloh with the Priests was a little boy called Samuel. He was his mother's first-born son. She had wanted to have a child, oh! such a long time, and she had prayed so earnestly that GOD would give her one. When at last GOD heard her prayer and Samuel was born, she was so thankful that she thought the best thing she could do was to give her little boy back to GOD. It must have been hard to give him up, but the thought of GOD helped her, and when he was old enough she brought him to the Tabernacle, and left him there at Shiloh under the care of Eli the Priest.

Now, though little Samuel lived where the Priests were so wicked, he was very good and did no wicked things himself. We need not be bad because there are bad people near us. He got up early and said his prayers, and was very obedient in all things he was told. He opened and shut the doors of the Tabernacle, and lighted

and put out the lamps, and did all that he could reverently and carefully for the service of GOD.

One night when Samuel was fast asleep, GOD came to him and called him by his name and woke him. At first Samuel did not know Who it was that called, but Eli told him that it was GOD; and then he answered humbly, "Speak: for Thy servant heareth." That meant that though he could not see GOD, he was listening to hear what He would say. Then Almighty GOD told him the same things that the Prophet had told Eli before. GOD said that because Eli had let his sons profane the Tabernacle, and do all kinds of wicked things there, despising and dishonouring the Name of their GOD, He would punish them and send them away from His Presence for ever.

When Samuel heard all this he was very much frightened, and when he got up in the morning he was afraid to tell Eli. Eli was a very old man, nearly ninety-eight, and was getting very feeble. It seems as if he could not do much, but sat in a seat near the Tabernacle all the day. Samuel knew that what GOD had told him would grieve the poor old man, and so he was afraid to speak.

But Eli knew that GOD had said something to Samuel in the night, and he asked him what it was. He told Samuel that he must tell, or GOD would punish him too. Samuel knew that Eli would feel very badly, but he knew he must obey him, and so he told him all that GOD had foretold.

This is what our picture shows us. Eli is sit-

ting near the door of the Tabernacle, and Samuel stands respectfully before him. He seems sad, for indeed it was a sad story he had to tell, and he must have been very sorry to know of all the trouble coming upon Eli. Eli himself seems quite overcome by it. His head is sinking down upon his breast; the fear and grief are almost more than he can bear.

It was sad for Eli to know that he and his sons would die in one day, and all his family become poor; but, ah! it was much more sad to think that any who had been chosen to serve GOD in His own House, to be His very Priests and to offer sacrifices to Him, should be so wicked and sin so terribly against the good GOD. GOD could not overlook such sin, and they would not repent and be good.

Now think of another story we read in the Bible.

A long time after the days of Eli, a Temple was built. The first Temple was built by King Solomon, and after that was burnt the Jews built another in the same place. This second Temple was still standing when our Lord JESUS CHRIST came into the world.

The Temple was built for the worship of GOD, and it was called the House of Prayer, or the House of God. It was a very holy place, and Almighty GOD commanded that because it belonged to Him it was to be kept holy.

But just as it was with the Tabernacle so it was with the Temple. People did not love GOD, they did not remember His words, and, instead of always keeping His Temple holy, they tried to see how they could get gain for themselves from it. This was very, very wrong, yet they did it, and when our Lord JESUS CHRIST came into His Temple He found it so. You have read what He found. There were people buying and selling in the very court of the Temple. They had sheep and oxen there, and cages of doves and tables of money, and were making great gain out of the sacrifices of GOD.

Oh, how grieved JESUS was when He saw this! He could not bear it. He made a little scourge, or whip, and drove them all out, and told them not to turn His Father's House, which ought to be a House of Prayer, into a den of thieves—a place in which to buy and sell and cheat people, and to rob GOD of His honour. Neither in the days of Eli nor when JESUS CHRIST was on earth would GOD allow people to sin in His House without being punished.

Now, can you think what these stories ought to teach us? The Tabernacle and the Temple,—have we anything like them now? Yes, we have, for we have the *Church*, the true House of GOD. What the Temple was to the Jews the Church is to us; it is our Father's House to which we go to worship Him.

It was dreadfully wrong for Eli and his sons to sin in the Tabernacle, and for the Jews to buy and sell in the Temple, and is it not wrong for us to do bad things in Church? What would you think of children who talked and laughed and played there, or who took apples or candy to Church to eat, when they ought to worship GOD? Would not that be almost as bad as the sons of Eli and the Jews? Indeed it would, for children.

Some day JESUS CHRIST is coming again; every Advent brings His coming nearer. When He comes He will find some children in Church. As the world turns round, it is always Church-time some where, so He is sure to find some in Church whenever He may come; perhaps they will be ourselves. Now, when He comes what will He find you doing? The Priest cannot see all that you do while you are there, but JESUS can. He knows even what you are thinking of. What would He do if He came and found children doing wrong even in His own House? Would He not cast them out? How grieved He would be! and yet He could not have them there. Ah! do think of this, dear children, when you are in Church, whether on Sunday or week-day. Say to yourself, "Am I really doing and thinking what I would like JESUS CHRIST to find me doing and thinking if He comes while I am here?" He will come, perhaps very soon.

These things must teach us, too, of another Church besides those of stone or brick or wood in which we come to worship GOD our King. There

is the Ark of CHRIST'S Church, of which we read last Sunday, His Spiritual Church, the Church into which you were baptized.

JESUS CHRIST, Who is now in Heaven, is coming again, and when He comes He will purify the world by fire, and only those will be safe who are in His Church. But when He does this, He will also purify His Church. When this time comes, when He casts out of His Church all who ought not to be there, shall we be left in it?

Let us think!

Just as JESUS would not let any one stay in the Temple to do wrong there, and just as He will not have any one do wrong in His Churches of brick or stone, so He cannot keep those in His spiritual Church who go on sinning wilfully. Oh, how dreadful it would be to be cast out of that Church, and to have no hope of ever being with Almighty GOD!

When JESUS comes He will take account with His children to see if they have been living as they ought in His Church; whether they have been really good. Have we remembered our Baptism, and that we were made GOD'S children then. Have we used the gift of the Spirit Which He gave us in Confirmation? Have we listened to the teaching He has given us in His Church? Have we truly confessed and put away our sins? Have we carefully prepared for our Communions, if we are old enough to receive Communion? All these are good things GOD has given us in His

Church, and we must give account of how we have used them all, and whether we have really been trying with all our heart and soul to live for GOD Who gave them.

It will not be enough to say then, "I was brought into the Ark of Christ's Church." JESUS CHRIST will look to see if we have lived as good children of the Church—that is, as good children of GOD our King. If not, we must not be surprised, and we should not have any reason to complain, if, when JESUS comes, He were to say to us, "You have not been true to Me, you have not loved My Church, you have not lived in the Church as the children of GOD ought, you have not really tried to be good, and now you can stay in it no longer; you must go, you must depart from Me."

How sad that any of His children should so live, and act, and speak, and think, that they will have to be separated from Him Who would have been their Saviour and their King, and from His Church, for ever.

SOLOMON DOING JUSTICE.

The Third Sunday in Advent

SOLOMON DOING JUSTICE: AND THE GENERAL JUDGMENT AT THE END OF THE WORLD.

1 KINGS iii. 17–28. REV. xx. 11–13.

KING SOLOMON, who built the first Temple in which the children of Israel worshipped GOD after they were settled in the beautiful land He gave them, was the son of King David. David had been so good a King that GOD promised that his son should reign after him, and be a greater King than his father. It is nice to think that a good father brings blessings from GOD for his children.

Solomon was very young when he came to the throne, and he knew he had a hard task before him. It would be a very hard thing to rule all the people well, always to know just the right thing to do, and to be able to distinguish the good from the bad. How could he hope to be able to do this?

When he thought of all this he did the very best thing any one can do—he prayed to GOD. Some men, if they were in Solomon's place, would pray for power, or more money, or a greater kingdom to rule over. Solomon only asked GOD to give him wisdom. He said, "Give Thy servant an under-

standing heart to judge Thy people that I may discern between good and bad : for who is able to judge this Thy so great a people ?" This prayer pleased Almighty GOD, and He promised to give Solomon the wisdom he prayed for.

I wonder why it is that both children and grown-up people are so often puzzled, and do not know whether what they want to do is right or wrong? Perhaps it is that they have not asked GOD to make them wise. Don't you think so?

It was not very long after he became king that Solomon had the opportunity to show whether he was wise or not.

There were two women who lived in the same house, just, I suppose, as people do now. You know that in all large cities there are often two or three families in one tenement, and I am afraid they do not always live peaceably together. It is very sad that human nature is so full of evil.

Well, these two women lived in the same house, and they both had babies. The babies were just the same size, for there was only three days difference in their ages, and I suppose they must have been very much alike. One night one of the women was not careful about her little one, and when she got up to feed it she found that it had got suffocated and was quite dead. Of course the poor mother felt very badly about it; we cannot wonder at that.

Now, she could not bring the baby to life again;

yet she wanted a baby, and so she planned a very wicked thing. It was still quite dark, and she took up her little dead baby and slipped gently out of her own room into the other woman's. There she found her fast asleep, with her baby breathing gently by her side. She went up very softly, and took away the living child and put her own little dead one in its place, so that, when the other woman woke, she might think that it was her own child that had died in the night; she thought she would not know the difference.

But when the woman woke in the morning and saw the little dead one at her side, she saw at once that it was not her own. She went to the other one, and said, "This is not my baby: you have taken my baby away and put yours in its place; you have killed your baby and stolen mine." But the other woman would not listen to her, nor give back the living child.

When she found this, the mother of the living child did the best possible things. She said she would go to the king, and he should decide. So she went to the king, carrying the dead baby, and made the other woman come along, carrying the living child she had stolen and wanted to keep as her own.

Now, when they stood before the king, one said, "The living child is mine;" and the other said, "No; it is mine." They both talked together, and they talked very loud and very fast, we may be quite sure, and neither would give in to the

other, so that the king did not know what to do. It was a hard thing to decide, for of course he had never seen the mothers or the children before, and there were no witnesses—no one who could help him at all. How could he decide? You or I could never have decided at all; do you think we could?

But now see how wise the king was. He had asked GOD to give him wisdom, and GOD told him of a plan by which he might find out which was the real and true mother of the living child. So after thinking a moment, and, I am sure, saying a little prayer in his heart, he said, "Bring me a sword." And a soldier with his great sword came and stood before the king. How they must have wondered what he was going to do! Then he said, "Divide the living child, and give half to one woman and half to the other." Oh, how dreadful that must have sounded! Could the king really mean to kill and cut in pieces the poor little baby?

When the king said this, one woman did not care. Do you think that was the real mother of the child? Oh no; it must have been the one who was telling lies. See her in the picture. She holds the living child in her arms, and seems to be offering it to the soldier as if she were saying, "Take the child and divide it, and let neither of us have it."

But the other woman threw herself down on her knees before the king, the dead child lying on the step before her. Oh, how she begged the king not

to kill the other little one! She would rather the wrong woman should have it than that it should be killed. Surely she must have been the true mother. Perhaps she thought that some day she would be able to get it back. But even if not, she would save its life; she would rather give it away than see it killed before her eyes.

Then King Solomon knew which was the true mother and which the thief. He gave the living child to the one who begged that its life might be spared. He had never meant to kill it, but this was the wise way GOD put into his mind to find out what he could scarcely have found out in any other way we can think of.

When the people heard of this they knew that GOD had truly answered the king's prayer. They saw that he was able to discern between good and evil, and they honoured and feared him because they saw the wisdom of GOD was in him.

This story, like our others, is to teach us something about JESUS CHRIST. You will think of it almost before I tell you. Solomon, the son of David, who sat upon his father's throne, brings at once to our minds the great Son of David Who sits upon a Throne for ever and ever. Solomon doing justice is a type of JESUS CHRIST, our Judge and King.

Some day the end of the world will come, and GOD will purify His Church, and will purify all the world by fire. In that day, the greatest day since

the world was made, we shall see JESUS CHRIST seated on His Throne like Solomon. When the door of Heaven was opened, and S. John allowed to look in and see the glory of GOD, he saw JESUS on a great white Throne; and we shall see Him too.

Some years ago I went to see Windsor Castle, one of the palaces of the Queen of England. I went with more than two hundred children. After we had been through a great many rooms, we came to that room where the Queen's throne is. The throne is made of pure white ivory, and is inlaid with gold: it is very beautiful. There was no one on the throne then, but as I stood before it I could not help thinking of the day when I and all those children with me would stand together before a much greater throne than that—the great white Throne of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

Yes, some day we shall be there, for before His Throne will be gathered all the people in the world —the men, the women, the little children; all, whether good or bad, will be there; the children who were with me at Windsor Castle, and the children who read this book;—all will be there.

And why will JESUS sit upon a Throne then? Why will He not walk about among the people as He did when He was on earth? The Apostles' Creed tells us, "He will come again to judge the quick and the dead." He will sit upon His Throne to *judge*. The quick are those who will be alive when He sits there; the dead will come back from Paradise. All will come to Him to be judged then.

But what does *judging* mean? It does not always mean *punishing*, though we sometimes speak as if it did. It means *separating*, or, as Solomon said in his prayer, "To discern between the good and the evil." This is what JESUS will do when He sits upon His white Throne—He will separate the good from the bad. Just as a man who owned both sheep and goats might sort them out and separate them, putting the sheep and goats into different flocks, so JESUS says He will separate all people, putting the good and bad on His right and on His left. Can we tell on which side we shall be when He does this?

We should often think about this; it might help us ever so much in our lives. Sometimes children are tempted to deceive their parents, their teachers, or friends. A teacher, as she looks at the girls in her class, cannot always tell which are good and which bad in their hearts. Sometimes the bad get off, while the good are blamed for things they never did. But JESUS CHRIST is Son of GOD as well as Son of David, and He has all the wisdom of GOD. We cannot deceive Him. Solomon knew how to distinguish between the good and the bad because GOD taught him; much more will JESUS the Son of GOD be able to know people as they really are.

It would help you very much, children, when you are tempted to do wrong and to deceive, if you were to think, "I can deceive my father or my teacher now, but some day I shall stand with father, and mother, and teacher, and all the boys and girls,

before the great white Throne of JESUS CHRIST, and then He and they will all know that I was wicked and told a lie."

I think we should never tell lies or do anything that is wrong if we tried always to remember the great white Throne and Him that sits on it.

You have often been taught to examine yourselves. Every child ought to examine himself or herself every night before they go to bed. Think how you have spent each day, and how it will look to you when you remember it before the Throne of JESUS CHRIST.

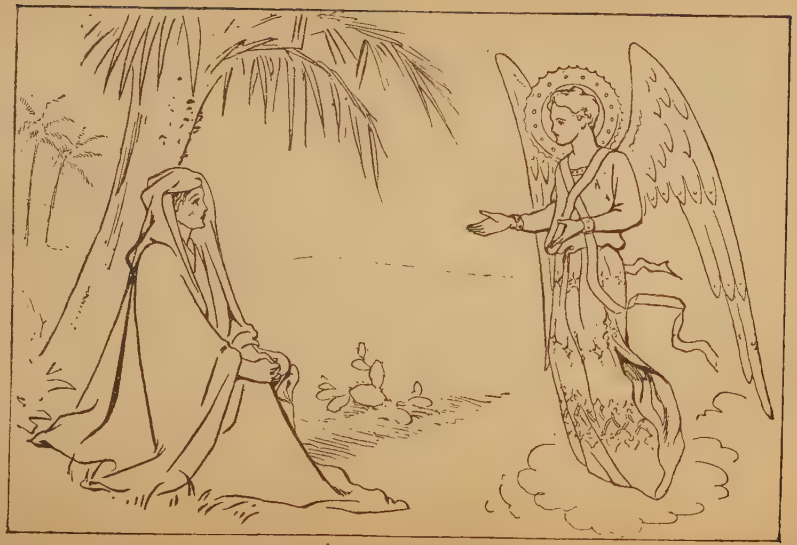
I knew a little girl who tried hard to examine her life, and found so many things that she had done wrong that she said, "Oh dear, I am so bad, I wish I had never been born!" But it was of no use wishing that, so she did something much better.

She knelt down and confessed all her sins to JESUS CHRIST, and prayed Him to help her to be truly sorry, and to take them all away, that so, when He sits upon His Throne, she may be among His good children and stay with Him for ever.

Are we all like her? Are we all so sorry for our sins, and trying so hard to fight against them, that we can hope that when our dear Lord JESUS sits upon His Throne, and puts the good on His right hand and the bad on His left, we may be among the good children on the right hand, and stay with JESUS our King for ever?

Ask yourself to-night—

"*On which side shall I be when* JESUS CHRIST *comes again to judge the quick and the dead?*"



MANOAH'S WIFE AND THE ANGEL.

The Fourth Sunday in Advent.

THE BIRTH OF SAMSON FORETOLD: AND THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

JUDGES xiii. S. LUKE i. 26–35.

WE will think to-day about one whom Almighty GOD sent a long while ago to deliver His people from their enemies.

GOD'S people, the children of Israel, had become very wicked. They broke His laws, and did not offer sacrifices or worship Him in any way as they ought. As a punishment for this, and to make them think of Him, GOD gave them into the power of the Philistines. These Philistines were a very strong and wicked nation who lived by the sea, just by the side of the country of the children of Israel. They used to go with their swords and spears and burn the houses and steal the cattle of the Israelites, and trouble them in a great many ways. GOD let them do this for forty years, so that His people suffered a great deal.

Forty years was so long a time, that they began to think GOD had forgotten them, or that He was so angry He would never forgive their sin. But this was not so; GOD did not mean to punish

them for ever. Besides, there were still some good people left in the land. So it is with us now. Though a whole town or country gets very bad, there may still be a few, perhaps very, very few, who believe in and who worship GOD. And GOD does not forget these.

Among the good people living at the time we are thinking of, there was a man called Manoah, and his wife, whose name we do not know. We are not told that she was good, but we can see that she was, from the things she said and did.

These good people had no children, and, like so many others, they wished very much to have a son. It was a great trouble to Manoah's wife, and she must have thought GOD was angry with her, because He would not give her a son.

One day she went out alone into the field. Perhaps she went out to work, but I think it is more likely that she went out to pray. In those days people had no churches, or synagogues, and no Temple in which to worship GOD. They lived in tents, or many together in a house, and when they wanted to be alone and think about GOD, they could find no better place than the fields. And so we think Manoah's wife went out to pray.

As she was sitting in the field, perhaps under a tree as we see her in our picture, some one came and stood before her. When she saw him she was very much afraid, and wondered why he had come. She thought him strange, too, for his countenance was not like any that she had ever seen before.

He looked, perhaps, as one might look in Church—as if he were not thinking at all about earthly things; as if he were thinking about GOD.

As he stood before her, he told her she should have what she had been wishing for—that GOD would give her a son.

Then he told her how this son was to be brought up. He was to drink no wine or strong drink, and he was never to have his hair cut nor his head shaved. He was to be given up altogether to GOD, and his long hair would be a sign of this. The man told her, also, that she was to be very particular herself, and not to drink wine or strong drink, and to be very careful in her eating, for the child she should have should be the servant of GOD until his death.

When the man had told her all this he went away, and she went home and told her husband Manoah all that he had said. It would not have been right to keep any secret from him, and besides, she knew that he would be as glad as she was. When she told her husband, she said the man's face was "like an Angel of GOD."

When Manoah heard his wife's story, he prayed that the Angel might come again, and teach them more about the child that was to be born. GOD heard his prayer, and the Angel came to the woman when she was again alone in the field. When she saw him, she begged him to wait while she ran and fetched her husband. Manoah came quickly. He spoke reverently to the man, for he saw at once that it was no ordinary man who had

come to them, but that he seemed like one who was always looking upon the face of God in Heaven, and thought of the message he had to give, and not so much of those to whom he had to give it.

The man told Manoah all that he had told his wife before, and said she must be very careful to do exactly as he had said.

Now, they felt quite sure that he had come from GOD, and they were so glad at the message he had brought that they wanted to make a feast for him. They asked him to wait while they made a fire and cooked a little kid for him. He said he would wait, but he would not eat anything, and that if they made an offering they must make it to Almighty GOD. So they lighted a fire, and offered a sacrifice to GOD. And then such a wonderful thing happened. While they were watching it, the man stepped right into the flames and went upward in the fire towards Heaven to GOD. How astonished they were! What a wonderful sight this was! Should not we like to have been there to see?

Manoah and his wife were now quite certain of what they only thought before—that he was indeed GOD'S Angel who had come to them, and they fell down on their faces and worshipped GOD.

Not very long after this, the son that the Angel had promised was born. You may be quite sure that his parents were very careful to bring him up exactly as the Angel had told them. They called his name SAMSON, and it is said "the child grew, and the LORD blessed him."

In time this child Samson grew up to be a man, the strongest man that ever lived. I cannot tell you now all the things that he did, but you can read them for yourselves some day in the Book of Judges.

But GOD had brought him into the world for a particular purpose. He was to deliver GOD'S people from their enemies. So when he grew up he fought against the Philistines, and he overcame them again and again, and delivered the children of Israel from their enemies and oppressors. GOD made him a judge over His people, and he ruled them for twenty years.

So we see that GOD did not forget His own people, even when they were wicked and forgot Him, and did not try to please Him. He was always good to them, and ready to forgive, and send some one to help them in their troubles, and deliver them from their enemies.

What wonderful thing does this story of the birth of Samson at once bring to our minds? THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. Quite right. But let us think a little of something else first.

Does not the story tell us something about sin and punishment, and about deliverance from sin as well?

We have thought about the End of the World, and of GOD purifying His Church, and of our Lord JESUS CHRIST on His Throne, judging between the good and the bad; but now think of this.

GOD does not leave all punishment until the

Judgment Day. He sometimes punishes people for their sins while they are still here on earth. The children of Israel ought to have overcome the Philistines long before, and driven them out of the land or destroyed them. But because they did not do this, but let them stay there, and even learnt a great deal of wickedness from them, GOD let the Philistines ill-treat and oppress them. If they had done as GOD told them at first, they would not have suffered as they did. So their sin brought its own punishment.

Something very like this happens now. People's own sins become their punishment. Do you want to know how this is?

Suppose children give way to bad temper, are cross and ill-natured;—this is a sin, and a very great sin too. Or suppose they are careless about the truth, tell little stories at home, make false excuses at school, exaggerate things, sometimes cheat and deceive;—these are all sins, and you can think of many more that Satan tempts children to do. Now, if children do these things, what will happen? If they are not sorry for them and try to put them away, they will get worse and worse every day. As the children grow the sins will grow too, until at last they will not be able to control their wicked tempers, but will be cross and hateful always. Or they will not be able to speak the truth, will perhaps scarcely know when they do tell lies; and no one will be able to trust them, or believe a word they say.

Then they may be very sorry, and wish that they could be loving and kind and gentle, and wish that they could tell the truth, so that people might believe and trust them; but perhaps it may be too late. When bad habits have grown up with them, and men and women want to be good and cannot, and when they know that it is their own fault, what a suffering and punishment this is to them!

This is true of a great many kinds of sin. So people do not always have to wait for the Day of Judgment; they get punished for their sins while they are still living here.

Oh, dear children, do be true to GOD while you are young! Don't let any fault go on without trying to overcome it. You don't know what sorrow you may bring upon yourselves by-and-by if you do not love and obey GOD now.

Sometimes it seems, like the children of Israel with the Philistines, as if there was no help for men and women against their sins. But GOD can help. It was for this He sent His Son into the world.

This is what the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary tells us of. As the Angel came to Manoah's wife, so the Angel Gabriel was sent to the Blessed Mary to tell her that she should have a Son.

But this Son was very different from Manoah's son Samson. Samson was to be very strong, and to deliver Israel from their outward enemies and from the troubles that came on them because of

their sins. The deliverance the Son of Mary would give was much greater than this.

When Gabriel came to her, he told her the Name her Son was to have. "His Name shall be called JESUS," and he said the reason of this was, "for He shall save His people from their sins." Do you see the difference? The Son of Mary would come, *not* to save from *punishment*, but to save from *sins*. How great a thing that is! for if we are saved from sin there can be no punishment at all.

How can He do this? What makes this great difference? Ah! we all know quite well. The Son of Mary is the SON OF GOD. This makes Him so different; this gives Him so great power. His Name "JESUS" means "GOD THE SAVIOUR;" He is the SON OF GOD. GOD our KING came into the world and was born of Mary that He might be also GOD our SAVIOUR.

Christmas Day is very near now. The birthday of JESUS CHRIST, when we shall rejoice because He was born to be our Saviour, to save us from our sins.

Think, then, a great deal of the Annunciation—of the Angel's message to the Blessed Virgin Mary. It will help us to keep Christmas better; it will help us to honour JESUS CHRIST, the Son of Mary and the Son of GOD.

And thinking of this will help us when we look on to that which Advent always tells us of, the End of the World.

When we think of that time, and of JESUS, our King and Judge, sitting on His Throne, separating the good from the bad, and sweeping the bad out of His Church, and then purifying the world by fire, we may be afraid—when we think of this and of our sins we may well be afraid—lest we too then be found amongst the bad. But to-day's lesson may help us.

Not long ago I was riding in a street-car with a good many other people. Just in front of me were two who looked like mother and daughter, and who were talking together. I was reading a book, and I did not hear all they said, but it seemed to me as if the daughter was a little uncomfortable—as if she did not like her mother to speak quite so loud. Presently I heard these words: "I always like snowdrops, they make me think of the Day of Judgment." You may be sure I stopped reading and listened then. I wondered what she meant; snowdrops had never made me think of this. "Yes," she added, "for they make me think of the Saints in white bowing down before our Lord on His Throne."

Now, was not that beautiful? I never heard anything so beautiful in a street-car. And I have never forgotten it, and I pray that she who said it may be among the Saints in that day.

Children, the Day of Judgment need not make us afraid.

JESUS CHRIST came to save us from our sins. If He does that, we shall then be white and pure.

Think of the pure and holy Child in the manger of Bethlehem—the same Child shall be our King on the white Throne. Think of the purity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of all GOD'S Saints around the Throne. The HOLY CHILD JESUS came that He might make His children pure. When we come to sing our carols and to worship Him, let us also ask Him to save us from our sins, that we may be His for ever. Let your little hearts long for Him with this prayer—

"*Make us to be numbered with Thy Saints in glory everlasting.*"

JOSEPH WORSHIPS JESUS, THE CHILDREN'S KING.

Christmas Day.*

THE BIRTH OF THE CHILDREN'S KING.

S. Luke ii.

It is Christmas Day, the birthday of our King. Where shall we go? How shall we spend it? There can be but one place. Where was He born? In Bethlehem. Then to Bethlehem we must go. Put everything else aside, and come to Bethlehem.

But it would be of very little use for us to go to Bethlehem to-day, to Bethlehem as it is now. There would be very little to see, though it would be nice to see the place where our King was born.

We must put ourselves back more than eighteen hundred and eighty years. If we could do that, what should we see, what should we hear? Let us stop and think.

It is the middle of the night, and we feel as if something strange is going to happen, something wonderful. For years the children of Israel have been looking to this time. God has promised a Saviour, and when He comes things

* When there are two Sundays after Christmas, this instruction may serve for the first, and the next for the second.

will happen that have never happened before. And the time is not far off.

There is a great crowd in Bethlehem. The Roman Emperor who rules over the whole country has commanded that every one shall go to the town or city to which he belongs by his birth, and have his name written down in the census book. Bethlehem is the City of David, and all the family of David, all his descendants, are there. What a long way some of them have had to come! And the Saviour, or Deliverer, GOD has promised is to be born of the House of David. So as they come they talk of Him. They could hardly think of anything else, could they? Oh, if He only would come, and deliver them from their troubles, and save them from the cruel Romans, who had made them all come away from their homes in the middle of winter, and who were always treating them ill! And as they talked they must have felt He was near. Now that all the family of David was gathered together, something would surely happen. But they did not know what.

Then, too, we may think of the Angels. They also have been looking forward and longing for the day when they would see Him of Whom GOD had told them long before. And they knew the time was near. Think of them thronging the courts of Heaven, expecting, waiting, that they may burst forth into a song of praise for the wonderful things GOD would show them. Oh, it is a wonderful night! Men and Angels, silent,

eager, expecting. "What is this wonderful thing that is to happen?"

"Wonderful night! wonderful night!
Angels and shining immortals,
Thronging thine ebony portals,
Fling out their banners of light—
Wonderful, wonderful night!" *

On this wonderful night there are some people watching. Let us go and sit with them. We do not like to be wandering about alone, especially at night. And children are very glad to have some one near them when they think anything strange or wonderful is going to happen. So, as we come near to Bethlehem, we see some men sitting round a fire. We will go to them, and we shall be all safe.

We could not go to better men, for as we come near we see they are shepherds; their sheep are lying on the ground all around them. "What are you doing, shepherds?" "Resting from our journey, and watching our sheep." "Where are you going?" "We go to Jerusalem to take our sheep to the Temple, that the priests and people may buy them and offer them in sacrifice to GOD." "Why do you watch to-night?" "We always watch our sheep at night, that no wild beasts may come and steal, and that no harm may happen to them." "Then, you don't know of anything wonderful to happen to-night?" "No, we have not heard of

* The whole of this carol may be sung here, if the story is being read to children. So with the other carols quoted.

anything; but if anything happens we shall see it, for we keep a very faithful watch, and when we are faithful in work we often learn about much greater things." So we sit down to watch by the shepherds.

And now the wonder comes. Suddenly there is a bright light. It shines all round us; it lights up the faces of the shepherds and the white fleeces of the sheep. And out of it there comes a beautiful form, pure and shining. Surely it is an Angel of GOD! What has he come to say? Is GOD angry? Is He going to punish us? We are afraid: people are always afraid when they see Angels.

But we need not be afraid. Listen to what he says. "Fear not, for behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy; which shall be to you and all people." To us, then, as well as to the shepherds. And then he tells of the wonderful thing that has happened. The SAVIOUR has come. He is in David's city, in Bethlehem. He is born of the family of David. The shepherds are to go and see Him. He has come to bring happiness—to give them peace. He is to be their Saviour, and, because He is of the House of David, He is their true and rightful King. What a wonderful night this is! How the hearts of the shepherds must glow at these words, and our hearts glow with them! The Saviour has come!

"While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The Angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around."

The Angels have been longing for this great time, and when they hear the words of their leader, they can no longer restrain themselves; they all burst forth together with the most wonderful song that the world ever heard. Some in Heaven, some on earth, they all sing together, "Glory to GOD in the highest; on earth peace, good-will towards men."

And now their song is done, and they all go back into Heaven, to praise GOD there. It is dark again all around; but the shepherds' hearts, and our hearts too, are bright inside and full of joy, because of the message GOD has brought us.

But listen! One shepherd says to another, "Let us go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass." They all get up and go; GOD will take care of their flocks. Let us go with them.

I wonder what the shepherds expected to find? The Angel had been bright and shining as the servant of GOD. Surely the Saviour Who was born would be at least as bright as he? No, they did not think that, for the Angel had said the Saviour was "wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger." That was more wonderful still. To think that GOD should send an Angel to speak of a little Child so poor that He had no house but a stable, no cradle but a manger!

And yet it was a glorious sight before them—a glorious sight before us in following them. The

stable, perhaps no more than a cave, dark and cold; the snow, maybe, on the ground outside; there may be but few people to see; the glorious Angels are all gone;—but the Most Glorious of all things is before us. We come in and see the little Child, and we know that He is the Saviour of the Jews; but, more than that, He is the Saviour of all the world, and He is this because He is the Son of GOD!

"Cradled all lowly,
Behold the Saviour Child,
Our GOD most holy,
In dwelling rude and wild!
Ne'er yet was regal state
Of monarch proud and great
Who grasped a nation's fate,
So glorious as the manger bed
Of Bethlehem."

A little child lying in its cradle is always a beautiful sight. It looks so fair and peaceful, as if no evil could ever come near it. We can never wonder that mothers love their babies. But how much more beautiful than all others is this little Child! And He is the more so because of the bareness of all things round Him. When we look at a baby lying in a cradle, covered with very white linen, a pretty canopy overhead, lined, perhaps, with pink or rose-coloured silk fringed with lace, and the light falls soft and rosy on the little one's face, we feel that half the prettiness belongs to the cradle and the nice things round. This little Child has nothing. He lies wrapped in poor linen, in the straw in a manger. All the beauty is His own.

Beautiful He is, and wonderful, for He is the Son of GOD. Look at Him well; He is our Saviour and our King.

But come near, children; we must not only stand and look. What does our picture seem to tell us?

The Blessed Virgin Mary has wrapped her little Child up, and now she holds Him gently and lovingly in her arms. As she does so, she calls to Joseph to come and see Him. Joseph—her husband, as the Bible calls him, her guardian, her protector, the man whom GOD has appointed to watch over her and her Holy Child—Joseph must come and see. And Joseph comes, but not to look curiously. No; as he comes near he drops on his knees to worship Him. No man may worship a little child on earth; no mother, however much she may love it, will dare to worship her own child. Why, then, does Joseph do this? Come, let us kneel by his side, and he will tell us what GOD has told him. "Joseph, why do you kneel and worship?" we may whisper quietly; and he will whisper back, "He is not my Child, though He is Mary's Son. GOD told me before He was born that He is the Son of GOD. I worship Him because He is my GOD, my King."

And Joseph bows his head, and stretches out his hands towards the Holy Child. He seems to pray. Is it of any use praying to that little Child? Does He hear and know? Yes, indeed; He hears, He knows all. He is glad to receive the prayers of all who kneel before Him, and He will answer all, for He is GOD. He comes to-day as a little Child, that

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we may learn not to be afraid; that we may be sure that GOD loves us; that we may learn to love Him, to pray to Him, as well as to worship Him, JESUS our SAVIOUR, JESUS our GOD, JESUS our King.

> "A Virgin most pure, as the prophets do tell,
> Hath brought forth a Babe, as it hath her befell,
> To be our Redeemer from death, hell, and sin,
> Which Adam's transgression had wrapped us all in.
> Rejoice and be merry, set sorrow aside,
> CHRIST JESUS our Saviour was born at this tide."

Are the shepherds with whom we have come surprised at seeing an ox and an ass in the stable where JESUS CHRIST is? Perhaps so. But we need not be. There is that verse in the Prophet Isaiah that explains why they are here: "The ox knoweth his Owner, and the ass his Master's crib;" and that other verse, "All the beasts of the forest are Mine, and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills." JESUS is GOD, all belongs to Him. He is not only King of men, but He rules over all creation. It was right that when He was born into the world, the animals should be there to do Him honour. "O all ye beasts and cattle, bless ye the Lord; praise Him, and magnify Him for ever."

And now, their worship over, the shepherds go home. And as they go they rejoice, and they tell every one what they have heard and seen; they spread the good news everywhere—JESUS is born to-day.

And this must be our work too. Think what they would say. If they met any one in sorrow, "Weep not, JESUS is born to-day." If they met any grieving

over their sins, "JESUS the Saviour has come." If any were quarrelling, "JESUS is born to bring peace and good-will." If any were angry with GOD, thinking GOD did not love them, "JESUS is born; GOD'S Son has come into the world." So wherever they went they told what they had heard and seen, and they carried joy with them.

Children, as we go home from Church to-day, as we think of all we have heard and seen, and all we have sung to JESUS, let us take joy with us. Let every one around be made happier by what we have known. Let us do our part to carry on the message which the Angels brought this day, "Glory to GOD in the highest; peace on earth, good-will towards men."

"Good Christian men, rejoice,
With heart, and soul, and voice;
Give ye heed to what we say:
News! news!
JESUS CHRIST is born to-day;
Ox and ass before Him bow,
And He is in the manger now:
Christ is born to-day!"

JOSHUA, THE LEADER OF THE PEOPLE.

Feast of the Circumcision.

JOSHUA, THE LEADER OF GOD'S PEOPLE: AND THE HOLY NAME JESUS.

NUMBERS xxvii. 18–23. S. LUKE ii. 21.

TO-DAY is the seventh day after Christmas Day. As we sometimes say, it is the Octave of Christmas. Christmas Day is so great a Festival that it stretches out over the seven days that follow it. If you look in your Prayer-book, you will see that the Proper Preface in the Communion Service is to be used on Christmas Day and seven days after. Counting Christmas Day, then, as the first, to-day is the eighth, or octave day.

Those of you who have begun to learn music know that the eighth note is the same as the first, only higher or lower in tone. So to-day our thoughts are the same as on Christmas Day. If we did not keep Christmas very well, I am afraid we shall, as it were, strike a lower note; but if we really kept it, and love and worship JESUS born on Christmas Day, I am sure we may be lifted up a little higher still to-day; we may find some new thing to praise GOD for—something to make us give more love still to JESUS our King.

Think again of the little Child, the Holy

Child JESUS, only eight days old, still at Bethlehem, still lying on the straw in the manger, or sleeping sweetly in His Blessed Mother's arms.

"Sleep, Holy Babe,
Upon Thy Mother's breast!
Great Lord of earth and sea and sky,
How sweet it is to see Thee lie
In such a place of rest!"

While we think of JESUS sleeping sweetly, let me tell you a story of a long, long while ago. Some of you, perhaps, know it already.

GOD'S people, the Children of Israel—you know we commonly speak of their descendants as the Jews—were in the land of Egypt. They went there to get food when there was a famine in their own land. When they had been there some years, a new king came to the throne, who made them all slaves and treated them very cruelly. He made them work all day, making bricks for hard taskmasters. Some of these bricks are in Egypt now; the great buildings built with them are still standing after more than three thousand years.

Among these people there were two who were very good, and they had a little son. They had to work very hard, but still they found time to teach their little boy about Almighty GOD. He must have grown up as a good boy, and we know that he was a good man.

When he was about forty years old, GOD sent His servant Moses to bring His people out of Egypt. We shall learn more about this another

time. The Egyptians did not want to set their slaves at liberty, but at last they were obliged to do so, and all the people of Israel—men, women, and children—were free, and went out of the country. Of course, our little boy, now grown up to be a man, went with them.

I do not know how it happened, but this man was chosen by Moses to be always with him, to wait upon him and help him in his work. Perhaps Moses saw that he was good, and felt that he was a man he could trust; perhaps—and this is most likely—GOD put it into Moses' heart to choose him, because GOD knew what sort of man he was, and the work He Himself wanted him to do. His name was Oshea.

Very soon after they came out of Egypt, the Children of Israel had to fight a great battle. A people called the Amalekites came against them; they wanted to kill them or drive them back into Egypt, or perhaps make them slaves for themselves. In this battle Oshea led the people; they followed him as their general, and by GOD'S help he gained a great victory.

When they had been travelling about a year, they came to the land of Canaan, which GOD had promised to give them. Moses, by GOD'S command, sent twelve men into the land to spy it out, to see what the country and the people were like, and come back and tell him. Oshea was one of these twelve. At this time GOD changed his name. He was no longer called *Oshea*, but *Joshua*.

This is the name we know him best by, and we shall call him by it.

Joshua and one other man brought back a good report of the land. It was well watered and beautiful, and full of fruit and corn and all that was good. But the other men said many things that were false, and frightened the Children of Israel by dreadful stories of the land and the people who dwelt there. They said there were great giants there, who built cities and towers reaching up to Heaven, and that if the people went there they would all be killed.

It was very foolish of the Children of Israel to believe all these stories about giants. Just as if Almighty GOD did not know about the land when He brought the people to it; or as if He could not take care of them in it if they went in as He told them to do. But they did believe these tales, and would not go; and then, as a punishment for not believing GOD, they had to go back into the wilderness and wander about for forty years.

During the forty years all the grown-up people who came out of Egypt died except three, and the children grew up and took their places. The three left were Moses, Joshua, and the other good spy whose name was Caleb.

And now the time had come for Moses, who had led the people so long, to be taken away. He was not to go into the land GOD had promised, but to see it from a distant mountain, and then, all alone with GOD, to die and enter his rest.

But some one must lead the people, and for this GOD chose Joshua. He had seen how faithfully he had served and helped Moses, and how true he had been to Him in all those long years, and He knew that there was no one who would lead the people better than he. So he told Moses to take Joshua and place him before all the people, that all might see him. Then he was to lay his hand on him and give him a charge in their sight, that the people might know that Joshua was to take his place, and that they were to give him obedience and to honour him even as they had honoured Moses himself. This is what our picture shows us. Joshua stands straight and firm, holding his sword and shield; he will give up his life in fighting rather than be untrue to GOD. Moses, holding GOD's rod in his hand, points to Joshua. "This is the leader GOD has chosen for you in my place. You are to follow him wherever he leads you; to obey him as you obey me."

And you see the high priest is there too, wearing his breastplate. GOD said that he was to be there, that the people might know that it was indeed GOD's Will that they should follow Joshua, and that Joshua himself might remember that all his honour and power came from GOD. Whenever Joshua wanted to know GOD's Will, or to pray for the people, he would go to the high priest, who would tell him what GOD wished him to do, and would offer his sacrifice to GOD. So Joshua would have good courage, and be sure that GOD would

help him, that he might lead the people safely into the Promised Land.

This man Joshua is a type of One Who came long after him. See how this is.

1. First let us remember his name was not always Joshua, but Oshea. Now the name "Oshea" means "Salvation." When he was chosen to be one of the twelve spies, the Name of GOD, that is, the name JAH, was added to his name, and instead of Oshea it became *Jehoshua*, or, as we generally write it, *Joshua*. This name means, then, as you can see, GOD the SAVIOUR. It was given to him that all might learn that by him GOD would save the people from the wilderness, and bring them into the beautiful land.

Now, you can see the type, and why we have this lesson to-day. Joshua, born of a poor mother in slavery in Egypt, has the same name as the little Child Who was born at Bethlehem on Christmas Day. You remember what the Angel said, "Thou shalt call His Name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins." "JESUS" means "GOD THE SAVIOUR." To-day, the Feast of the Circumcision, JESUS received His Name. He was only eight days old, but his Blessed Mother did not keep Him without His Name. Some people keep their children three months, or six months, or even longer, before they bring them to be baptized and to have a Christian name, although the Church says they are to be baptized not later than the second Sunday

after their birth. But Mary obeyed GOD, and to-day, the eighth day from His birth, JESUS CHRIST was circumcised, and received the Name of GOD, sent Him by His Angel. Remember, then, that Joshua bears the same name as JESUS, our SAVIOUR, our KING.

2. And now what did Joshua do? He went before the people; he was their leader until they came safely into the fair land which GOD had promised to give.

There is a fair land before us, more fair and beautiful than any the eye of man has yet seen. Its name is Heaven, and the way into it is through Paradise. JESUS leads His children there. He went to Paradise, and then He rose again, and afterwards ascended into Heaven. There He waits now for us; to that fair land He leads His children who love Him.

Canaan, to which Joshua led the Jews, was beautiful, but what was its beauty compared to the Land JESUS will give us, His glorious Heaven?

3. Think of another way in which Joshua is like our Lord JESUS. He could not take the people into Canaan until he had fought and overcome all their enemies. How many battles he fought, we do not know, but they were very terrible. But GOD helped him.

And JESUS all His life through was fighting against Satan and his evil spirits. We do not know, we cannot tell, how bitter that fight was, but we know a little how JESUS suffered in the greatest fight of all

when He died on the Cross, going to fight in the world we cannot now see.

And He fights for and with His children now. We are signed with His Cross that we may fight manfully under His banner. We have courage to fight; we know we can win the victory, for our Joshua—JESUS our SAVIOUR—has fought first, and now fights with us.

4. One other thing you can think of. When all the fights were over and they were safe in their own land, Joshua divided the land to the people. He it was who said as GOD taught him what each was to have; their land, their streams, their land for corn and their land for vineyards—all was as he said.

Think how JESUS gathers His children in Heaven, and gives each one his place in the kingdom prepared for him. No one will be forgotten, no one left without a place, no one need be jealous of another. JESUS is there; JESUS loves all; JESUS gives to each one the place that is best for him, the work that will make him happiest, the place in Heaven that will give him the greatest possible joy in the Presence of GOD.

Now, how good it is to think of all this to-day!

It is not only the Feast of the Circumcision, but it is the first day of the New Year. Not of the Church's year—that begins with Advent—but of what we call the civil year, the beginning of the year according to the law of the State in which we live.

Is it not a good thing to begin the year thinking about JESUS CHRIST? We shall have many things to think of all through the year—our books, our friends, our school, our play—but first and chief of all let us think of Him.

If we can think of Him and worship Him to-day, and at the beginning of each day as it comes, will that not be one way of following Him all through the year?

The Children of Israel never did anything while Joshua lived without thinking how he would like it, whether it was the thing GOD had told him they were to do. They obeyed him in all things. Can we, the children of GOD, be less obedient to JESUS CHRIST? Try this year, in your homes, in your studies, in all your duties to GOD and your neighbour, to be as obedient to Him as the Israelites were to Joshua. Every day ask very often, "Is this what Jesus wants me to do?" So you may learn to follow Him all your life through.

We do not know that we shall get to our Promised Land this year, or next, or whether we may have to wait forty years. Very likely some of us will get there this year, perhaps all of us. But if not we must follow JESUS year after year, obeying Him truly, fighting under Him against all that is evil, trying to keep closer and closer to Him; and then, however long the time seems, we shall be sure to get there at last. And we shall have the same leader all through our life. Joshua only lived one hundred and ten years, and then he had to leave the

people that he loved, not sure that they would always be faithful to GOD, not sure but that their enemies would come and drive them out of the land he had won for them. But "JESUS CHRIST is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He never changes, He never grows old. Those who follow Him will have Him always, and there is no power, no enemy that can come in to trouble those whom He has brought into the beautiful land which He has promised to those who love Him.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA BEFORE KING SOLOMON.

The First Sunday after the Epiphany.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA BEFORE KING SOLOMON: AND THE WISE MEN WORSHIPPING JESUS CHRIST.

1. KINGS x. 1–13. S. MATT. ii. 1–12.

A FEW weeks ago we were reading about a great king who had a beautiful white throne overlaid with gold, perhaps the greatest king and the richest that ever lived—King Solomon, the son of David. Our picture shows him seated on this throne. There were six steps going up to it and on each stood two lions made of gold. Twelve golden lions; what a wonderful sight!

You will remember, I think, that King Solomon was not only very rich, but very wise. He had prayed that GOD would give him wisdom, that he might judge the people of Israel and rule them rightly according to the Will of GOD, and GOD had heard his prayer. He was the wisest man that ever lived.

It is not strange that people should have talked about so great and wise a king, and that his fame should have been carried all over the world.

Far away from Jerusalem and Solomon's palace there lived a great queen. We do not know her

name, but she was queen of the country of Sheba, which was in the land we now call Arabia. This queen heard of Solomon and his wisdom, and especially how wise he was in things "concerning the Name of the Lord," as we might say, "in all matters of religion," and she wished to see him.

Perhaps she thought that he who knew so much about the things of GOD must have been taught by GOD; that his wisdom was Divine. There were many things, too, that she wanted to know—hard questions to which no one had been able to give her an answer. So she made up her mind to go and see this king.

What a grand sight it must have been! for she came with royal state. Her courtiers and servants came with her, and she brought rich presents, gold and sweet spices—presents fit for a king; and they rode upon camels, making, we are told, a "very great train."

We can imagine with what dignity Solomon would receive her, seated on his golden throne, with the lions, as it were, watching around him. We may be sure that when the queen came into his presence and knew that he was so great, so much greater than she could ever hope to be, she would kneel down before him, as our picture shows us. She has knelt before the steps, and opened and spread out her gifts, and seems to be pointing to them as if she were begging the king to accept them from her. There is a crown of gold, which she has laid down as though she intended to say she would willingly be under

his rule—that her kingdom should be subject to his; and there are other vessels of gold as well. In these are the spices she has brought, with many more besides, that her servants would bring in at her order. Indeed, there were never such beautiful spices, nor so many, brought to Jerusalem as the Queen of Sheba brought.

When the king had received her gifts, she began to ask him questions. Some, I dare say, were very hard; but whatever they were Solomon answered all—there was not in all her mind anything he did not explain to her. How glad she must have been at that! It is dreadful to have a lot of things we want to know, and to have no one we can ask about them.

After she had her questions answered, the queen wanted to see Solomon's house, and he took her over it all. There was nothing she did not see—the servants, the kitchen, the cooking for the king's table. She wanted to see all that was to be seen. She went all over Jerusalem, and saw the Temple Solomon had built and the wonderful ascent to it which he had made—nothing seems to have surprised her so much as that—till at last she was quite tired out with the great sights and the wonder she felt; she had no spirit left to see or ask any more. She could only say that, although she had been told a great deal, she had not been told one-half of all the truth; the splendour she saw was beyond anything she could have conceived.

It may be that she wished she could stay there,

even if she could only have been a servant. "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom." And then she praised GOD for setting such a great and wise king upon the throne of Israel.

You will not find it hard to see why we have this lesson at this time. We are keeping the Epiphany, the day that tells us of the coming of the Wise Men from the East to worship the Lord JESUS CHRIST our King. The Queen of Sheba coming to King Solomon makes us think of these Wise Men; and indeed there is much that is the same in the two stories, though there is much that is very different.

The Wise Men came to Jerusalem, but they did not find JESUS there. No; He was at Bethlehem, and there they went and saw Him. And was He on a throne of gold? Ah no! He was on the best throne a little child can have, far better than gold or ivory—He was on His Mother's lap. And there was no gold about Him. He was poor and humble, in a little cottage at Bethlehem; no great court, no court of servants standing round—only His Blessed Mother and Joseph, the poor but faithful carpenter.

Yet they worshipped Him. They opened their treasures and gave Him gifts—gold and frankincense and myrrh. Although He looked so poor, they knew He was a King; and though He had no earthly throne, they believed He had a kingdom—a kingdom great and glorious and worthy of Him.

JESUS our King, though He was born poor at Bethlehem, is a greater King than Solomon; Solomon's kingdom is as nothing compared with the Kingdom of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

The Queen of Sheba teaches us of these Wise Men just as Solomon on his throne is a type of JESUS CHRIST, and the lesson both she and they teach us is the same. JESUS is our GOD and King, let us fall down and worship Him.

When we think of a throne, we cannot help thinking of the Throne of Almighty GOD. It is a great white Throne, and He that sits upon it is like the Son of man—He is JESUS CHRIST.

But GOD has other thrones too—other places where He reigns as King.

What is the church but His house, His palace, on earth? When we come there, and when we look up and see the altar decked as it ought to be—beautiful with hangings and embroidery, and flowers, and many lights—does it not seem to tell us that it, too, is a throne of GOD? JESUS comes upon His altar, that there we may bow before Him and worship Him, our Saviour and our King.

Besides this, do we not sing?—

"Oh, make our hearts Thy dwelling-place,
And worthier Thee!"

and in another hymn—

"And for His dwelling and His throne
Chooseth the pure in heart;"

and again—

"Reign within our hearts alone."

So we seem to say that a pure heart, the heart of a little Christian child, can be the dwelling-place, the home, the throne of JESUS CHRIST. How beautiful that is to think of! Some day we shall see Him in the glory of Heaven. We know that He is on the altar-throne in His church. But for the first of these we have to wait, and we cannot be always in church before the other; but in our hearts we have a throne where He can always be, where we can always worship Him.

GOD is very good to His children. They have not all to take long journeys like the Queen of Sheba and the Wise Men; they have not to go about asking people to tell them where JESUS CHRIST can be found. GOD has come to them, JESUS is always with them; wherever they are, whatever they are doing, they can, if they will, shut themselves as it were into their own hearts, and there worship JESUS their GOD.

Oh, if we could only think of that, how glad sometimes we might be to be quiet and alone! We want to be always running about, don't we? And sometimes, when we cannot go out, perhaps when we cannot go to church, we fret, and worry people round us. Would it not be better sometimes to be very quiet and still, to be quite willing to stay at home, to be all alone? We might say, "I don't mind being alone; JESUS is in my heart, I will stay with Him."

But we have not quite finished with this good

queen. She not only saw King Solomon and gave him gifts and honour, but he gave her all that she desired. If we worship JESUS, what does He give us? Oh, a thousand times more than Solomon gave her! Think a moment of what she saw.

"The meat of his table." Has our King a table, and is there food on it for us? The altar-throne is the table of the Lord, and there the Body and Blood of JESUS CHRIST are taken and received by His faithful children.

"The sitting of his servants, his ministers, and their apparel," that is, their dress. We are the servants of JESUS CHRIST, and what is our dress? The Saints will be in white around His Throne, and we want to be among them. But their beautiful dress is not made of white cloth or silk, though it were ever so fine. It is the whiteness of souls whom He has washed and made pure from sin, the goodness that He gives them.

Will not He give us these things? Don't you think, if King Solomon was so good as to give the Queen of Sheba all she asked for, our King will give His children gifts too? There is not anything too great or beautiful for Him to give to those who love Him.

The Queen of Sheba thought Solomon's servants happy because they could be always before him and hear his words. I suppose we ought to be happy because we can be always before JESUS our Lord. And yet, let us think a moment; is it always so?

Suppose a boy or a girl were to say they would not go to church, they "did not feel like it," they did not care to worship JESUS on His altar-throne; or if they would not say their prayers, if they thought their prayers tiresome—wished they had not got to say them. Suppose they never stopped to remember that JESUS is in their hearts, never worshipped Him there. Why, surely all that would be to be very unlike the Queen of Sheba—to be not half as good as she, not half as good, either, as the Wise Men. JESUS CHRIST says so Himself. This queen came almost from the end of the earth to see and hear Solomon, who was only a man; what shall be said to those who will take no trouble at all to hear JESUS CHRIST? In the Day of Judgment, the Queen of Sheba will have a higher place in GOD'S Kingdom than they. Don't forget the good example she sets you, as well as that of the Wise Men who came from the East to see the little Child in His Mother's lap. Try and let it be your greatest joy to worship JESUS CHRIST your King in Heaven, in church, and, perhaps more than all, in your own hearts. Let Him reign there.

Do not forget these things. Some children have remembered them, and have loved to worship and bring gifts to JESUS CHRIST.

There was a little boy in Paris who wanted to give GOD something, yet he seemed to have nothing to give. One day he was in church when it was being prepared for some festival. He was very

fond of going to church, even on week days; perhaps he had been a choir-boy or an acolyte, and was trying to help. Some one had built a beautiful pyramid of roses on the shelf behind the altar, and wanted one more rose to finish it, but they were all gone—not one could be found. The little boy saw this and was sorry. And then he remembered something. His mother had given him a beautiful moss-rose tree on his birthday. There were buds on it, and one, the very first, was just breaking into bloom. How he had watched it, his first rose! How often he had thought what a pleasure it would be to carry it to his mother, the first bloom of her tree. But now another thought came to him; he left the church, ran home, and up into his room. One moment he waited—for it was a hard thing for him to do—and then he broke the rose off and hurried back to church, and placed it on the top of the pyramid there. Don't you feel quite sure that when, next morning, he knelt to worship before the altar-throne of JESUS, he was happier and more full of love in his heart because of the gift he had made to JESUS his King?

Give first your hearts to JESUS, and then it will be easy to give everything else He asks to JESUS our King.

THE DESTROYING ANGEL IN EGYPT.

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany.

THE DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN IN EGYPT: AND THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE.

EXODUS xiii. 11–15. S. LUKE ii. 22–24.

OUR Lord JESUS CHRIST was born in Bethlehem, and Bethlehem will always be held in honour for this. But He did not always remain there. The first place He was taken to was Jerusalem. We will think of this to-day.

When He was just six weeks old, Joseph and His Blessed Mother went up with Him to Jerusalem, to present Him before GOD in the Temple.

She did this because it was GOD'S command. Almighty GOD had commanded that the firstborn son of every family should belong to Him. He must be taken up into the Temple and offered to GOD, and then brought back by the parents, redeemed, for themselves. They had to give five shekels of Jewish money, and then the little child was their own again. JESUS CHRIST was the first-born and the only Child of Mary, and so she went up with Him to the Temple to redeem Him according to the law.

The law required that she should make another

offering as well. After the birth of every child, the mother was to go up to the Temple—just as women go to be churched now—and to offer a lamb to GOD; or, if she was poor and could not afford a lamb, she might give two turtle-doves or young pigeons. Joseph and Mary were very poor, and so her offering was two turtle-doves. We should like to have seen Mary, so pale and beautiful, holding her little Child in her gentle arms, and Joseph standing quietly by her side, with the doves in his hands. They did everything as GOD had told them, and then they went back again to Bethlehem.

All this must have seemed very strange to some people. People who were not Jews, and did not understand the law, must have wondered very much. They could not think why every woman should go all the way to Jerusalem to offer her first-born son in the Temple, and then to buy it back for herself. Was it not hers already? What could it all mean? The boys and girls, growing up and seeing these things done by people round them, must have wondered too, and asked, as children will, "Why do they do these things?" We will learn to-day.

We must go back again to the Old Testament, to the history of the Jews, far, far back, before the days of Solomon, back to the time when Joshua was still a young man, back to the time when the Children of Israel were still slaves in the land of Egypt.

We have learnt something about this already,

and how Almighty GOD sent His servant Moses to bring them out of the land.

When Moses came to the king—Pharaoh, the wicked king who treated the people so cruelly—and said that GOD wished all the people to go free, Pharaoh would not listen to his message, would not obey. It was not very likely that he would set free all his slaves, who were building him such splendid cities and palaces, unless he was obliged to do so. It was of no use for Moses to tell him about GOD, and even to do some wonderful things before him to show that he came with GOD'S power; Pharaoh only said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey Him?"

Then GOD said He would bring punishment on Pharaoh and his land, that they might learn to respect Him and to obey His word, and not to treat His people cruelly any more. He brought upon them nine plagues, one after another.

First, all the water of Egypt was turned into blood; this was a terrible plague in a hot country, where people need water so much. Then the land was covered with frogs, even in the houses. Next the dust was turned into lice; and after that, swarms of flies came everywhere. Then there was a dreadful disease among the cattle; and this was followed by a plague of boils and sores upon the men and women. After this there were great hailstones, which destroyed the corn; and after the hail, a plague of locusts, which eat up every green thing that was left. The ninth plague was a great

darkness. It was so dark for three days that no one was able to go out of his house at all. We should have thought that these plagues were enough to teach Pharaoh how foolish, as well as wrong, it was to fight against GOD. But no, he would not obey; he still would not let the people go, though the land of Egypt was almost destroyed.

When GOD saw this, He said He would send one more plague, the most terrible of all, and that then Pharaoh would give in. All the first-born children in all the Egyptian families should die in one night. I suppose the Egyptians did not believe this would happen. Surely if they had believed it, they would rather have sent all the Jews away free than lose one little child out of every house in the land. But they did not believe, or they did not care, and so the punishment came. The Angels of GOD went through all the land in the night; they went into every house where there were Egyptians, and in every house a child died.

What a terrible thing this was! Of course, it was a very good thing for the children. We can never be sorry when a baby dies—I mean, sorry for the baby's sake. We can pity the parents, and feel for their loss; but for the children we are glad. They will never grow up to feel pain or sorrow; they will never grow up to be wicked. For these little ones death was a happy thing, but it was dreadful for the parents.

Why did GOD choose this way to punish them? I think there were two reasons. GOD had chosen

the Children of Israel to be His own people—He had never chosen any others—and He calls them His firstborn. So the Egyptians had been ill-using GOD'S firstborn.

And then think of a particular thing they had done. They wanted to prevent the Children of Israel from becoming a greater nation, and so they ordered their children to be killed when they were born; they had thrown many, many little boys into the great river Nile, that they might be eaten up by crocodiles. This was the second reason; that they might be punished in the very way in which they had been ill-treating others.

So all the firstborn children in Egypt died, and when the Egyptians saw that, they set GOD'S people free. They got up in the middle of the night, and hurried them away; they were afraid to keep them any longer.

But how was it that when the Angel went through Egypt by night, he only went into the houses of the Egyptians? How did he know the houses of the Israelites?

Of course, the Angels of GOD know many things that we do not, but besides that, GOD gave them a sign by which to know the houses of His people.

Look at your picture. The Angel is standing at the door of a house; he is just going in. His face is set and stern, and yet he seems rather as if he shrank from the terrible work he had to do. But look and see the difference between this door and

the one the Angel has passed by. The one he has passed has dark marks on each door-post and over the door; this door has no marks. Is that the reason? is that how he knows one from the other? Yes; but what are the marks?

They are marks of blood. GOD had told Moses to tell all the Children of Israel that on this night they were to gather in their houses, and each family was to take a lamb and make a feast with it. They were to roast the lamb, and eat it with bitter herbs and unleavened—that is, what we call heavy—bread; and the blood of the lamb they were to sprinkle on the door-posts, and then they would be safe. So the doors marked with blood were the doors of the Children of Israel, and the Angels did nor go in there to destroy; they passed them over.

What a wonderful night that was for GOD's people! How do you think those women must have felt, as they hurried out in the dark, each one clasping her little child to her breast, and hearing around the weeping of the Egyptian mothers over their dead children? How thankful they must have been! They could never forget that night.

But lest, as years went on, it should be forgotten, Almighty GOD made the law we have heard. All firstborn were to belong to Him. The firstborn of cattle were to be offered in sacrifice; the firstborn sons were to be offered to Him in the Temple, and then redeemed by the parents. Do you think that the Jewish mothers minded giving the money for their children? Oh no! I am sure they did not.

If any one who did not understand had said to them, "How strange this is! Is it not hard you should have to buy your own son back?" I think they would say, "Oh no! I should not have had my child at all, I should not have been here myself, if GOD had not been so very good to me. I am thankful for the deliverance of my people out of Egypt. I am thankful that He has given me the greatest blessing a woman can have—He has given me a son. I do not mind what I do for Him in return." And so they would think the money they paid to be much more like a thank-offering than a payment of a debt or command.

For hundreds and hundreds of years the Jews continued to do this. This is why JESUS CHRIST was taken, at six weeks old, into the Temple, to be presented before GOD and then redeemed, the only Son of Mary. Joseph and the Blessed Mary remembered GOD's goodness to His people, and were glad.

Now, what shall we take away to remember from this story? There are so many things in it worth learning and remembering. Perhaps it will be best for us to think about thankfulness.

How thankful the Children of Israel felt when they were really out of Egypt—had crossed to the other side of the sea, and were safe from their enemies! And still more, when the children and young people who could remember the hard life there, found themselves safe in the new land, and

knew that they could bring up their own children in peace and safety.

People are always glad when they are set free from captivity. I remember a beautiful little story about that.

A good many years ago, not long after the great battle of Waterloo, when peace was made between England and France, a strange-looking man was seen standing on the wharf at one of the English seaports. He was tall and sunburnt, and there was something in his face that made him look as if he had suffered. He was standing watching a man who had birds for sale, a cage full of English thrushes and blackbirds. The poor birds were beating themselves against the bars, wanting to be free. After watching a while, the stranger went up to the man and bought all his birds, paying for them with gold. People wondered as they saw him, for he took the cage, opened the door, and, taking the birds out one by one, tossed them up in the air, and, with a smile on his face, watched them fly away, rejoicing in their liberty. Then, giving the cage to the man, he said to those standing round, "Do you wonder at what I have done? Ah! if you had known as I have what it is to be shut up in a foreign prison, you would know how to pity any who are in captivity." He could not forget his own deliverance, and he felt he must set others free.

Has not GOD set us free? Were we not all born in sin, and did He not send His Son to redeem us? The Children of Israel were set free through the

blood of lambs and the death of the firstborn of Egypt. We are set free from sin by a far greater thing than these—by the shedding of the Blood of the firstborn Son of GOD, JESUS CHRIST our Lord. "In this was manifested the love of GOD towards us, because that GOD sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

For this we must be thankful. We can show our thankfulness by going into GOD's house, by making offerings there, remembering that we should have no house of GOD to go to, no hope of being able to love GOD, no thought of GOD as our Father, no thought of JESUS as our King, if GOD in His love had not set us free.

And we can show our thankfulness to others, telling them of the great things GOD has done, telling them of the love of JESUS CHRIST, and trying to lead them into His Church, to be baptized with His Baptism, to be sharers in the salvation which He has given us, that they, like ourselves, may know the liberty of the children of GOD.

PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER FINDING MOSES.

The Third Sunday after the Epiphany.

THE PRESERVATION OF MOSES: AND THE SLAUGHTER OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

EXODUS ii. 1–10. S. MATT. ii. 13–18.

WE have several times spoken a little about Moses, when we have been thinking of the Children of Israel and their deliverance from Egypt; to-day I think our lesson must be all about him.

You know where the land of Egypt is—in the north-east corner of Africa; and you know where the Holy Land is too—almost in the south-west corner of Asia. Jacob, who was also called Israel, lived with his twelve sons in the Holy Land, which was then called Canaan. When there was a great famine, and no corn or food could be had in Canaan, the whole family, seventy persons in all, went into Egypt to stay. Jacob died there, and his sons and all their families remained. The king was very good to them, because Joseph, one of Jacob's sons, was there before the rest, and had been very useful to the king and his people.

The Children of Israel—who have always been called by this name, because Israel was the name GOD gave their father Jacob—were GOD's own people. He had chosen them, and promised to

bless them. He did not forget them, though they were for many years in the land of Egypt; His blessing rested on them there.

The chief sign of His blessing was that they became a very great people; there were a very great many children born to them. We are told in GOD'S Word that it is a sign that GOD'S blessing is resting on a nation when He gives them a great many children, and that when there are few children we know that GOD is displeased with them. This great blessing, then, was on the Children of Israel—they had many children.

Now, the Egyptians saw this, and were afraid. They thought that the Children of Israel would become so many that they would take the whole land, and perhaps drive them out. The good king was dead, and the new king was a hard, cruel man. So they made all the Israelites work as slaves, setting hard taskmasters over them, and compelling them to make bricks and build great cities for Pharaoh the king. And they did worse than this. The king sent for the nurses, and told them the people were getting to be too many, and they must help him to stop this. He said they were to go about among the women, and whenever a baby boy was born they were to kill him; the baby girls might live. How dreadfully wicked!

But these nurses were good women, and would not do what the king wished. Then Pharaoh ordered all his own people, his soldiers and servants, to go and seize all the little boys and

throw them into the river. This river was the great river Nile, that flows all through the land. It is full of crocodiles—very fierce creatures, like very large lizards; I dare say you have seen pictures of them—and they would eat the little children up. We do not know how many of the little children were eaten so; such cruelty is horrible to think of. The poor people could not help themselves, for Pharaoh had made them all slaves, and he and his soldiers were far stronger than they.

Among the Children of Israel there was a man called Amram, whose wife's name was Jochebed. They had already two children, a girl of twelve years old and a little boy; and now, after the king had given his cruel order, another little boy was born. He was a very beautiful child. His mother loved him very much, and oh! she could not bear to think that he must be killed. So she kept him hidden in the house for three months.

But when he was that age, it became hard to hide him. He was getting a big boy, and I suppose he would sometimes cry, and cry very loud and make a great noise. They were afraid some one would hear him and find out where he was, and tell the Egyptian soldiers, and then he would be killed. But what could they do?

At last they thought of a plan by which, perhaps, he might be saved. They made a little ark, or boat, of bulrushes—something like a basket woven very close—and they covered this all over with pitch to keep the water out. Then they put their

little child in it, and placed it among the long grass and rushes by the river's brink. They thought it might float away to some place of safety, or that some one would find it and take care of the child, We may be quite sure that they prayed that GOD would give His Angels charge over their little one. The sister, who was about twelve—her name was Miriam—stayed near to see what became of the ark and her little brother.

GOD took care of him. The daughter of the King of Egypt used to go down to the river to bathe, either because it was hot and she wished to refresh herself, as people do now, or because the Egyptians worshipped the river Nile as a god, and bathing themselves in its water was one way in which they showed their reverence for it. She came down, and GOD led her to the very place where the little ark was lying. When she saw it, of course she wanted to know what it was, and what was in it. One of her maids brought it to her, and opened it. Oh, how surprised she was when she saw the little child. Perhaps, as we see in our picture, the maid took the baby up and held it out to her, that she might look at it. I wonder if that maid was an Israelite herself, and, guessing what it all meant, tried to make the king's daughter pity the little helpless one? The baby cried, and then the king's daughter said this must be one of the children of the Hebrews, and she was very sorry for it. I think she must have had a tender heart, though her father was so cruel, don't

you? I am sure she had been sorry when she knew that so many little ones had been thrown into the river. So she wished to save this one. When Miriam, the child's sister, saw that he was picked up, and that the king's daughter looked kind and pitiful, she came running up, and offered to go and find a nurse who would take care of the child for her. The king's daughter was glad, and so Miriam ran and fetched her own mother. Ah! how glad the mother was to get her boy back into her own arms, even though he was now to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter!

The princess said she would pay her wages, but do you think the mother cared for that? She had her child again, and now he was safe; no one would dare to hurt him. So GOD saved his life.

The child grew up, and Pharaoh's daughter called him MOSES, which means "drawn out," because she drew him out of the water. When he grew to be a big boy, he was taken into the king's palace to be clothed and educated. He was taught everything that the wisest men of the Egyptians could teach him, and he remained with the king's daughter until he was forty years old.

When Moses was come to this age he went away into the wilderness, giving up the king's palace and all the riches of Egypt, wishing for none of those things if only he could help his brethren in their sorrow and slavery.

You know already how, when the proper time was come, and Moses was prepared for his work,

GOD sent him back to Pharaoh, telling him to set the people free; last Sunday we read how that freedom was gained for them. GOD had watched over Moses and saved him from death, that afterwards He might use him to save all the people from slavery in Egypt.

How wonderful it is to think that GOD sees all that we do, and all that we are going to do! He sees all things beforehand, and can plan so as to carry out His own Will. Whenever He wants a work done, He can always foresee and guide the men and women of the world so that there shall be some one to do it. He brought Moses into the world; He put it into his mother's heart to hide him; He whispered to her to make an ark; He told her where to put it; He brought Pharaoh's daughter to the very place; He made her tender-hearted; He provided a home for Moses; He taught and trained him in the wilderness; and He gave him power to work great miracles before king Pharaoh;—and all this that the Children of Israel might be set free. What is there that GOD cannot do?

Now, is there not a story in the New Testament that is something like this? Do you remember any king who was very wicked, and who made his soldiers go and kill a great many children? I think you will know at once. King Herod! Yes, that cruel king who reigned in Jerusalem at the time when our Lord JESUS CHRIST was born.

When JESUS was born at Bethlehem, three Wise Men came from the East to worship Him. GOD had told them by a beautiful star that a new King was born, and just as the Queen of Sheba came to see and bring gifts to King Solomon, so these men came to worship and bring gifts to JESUS CHRIST. You remember that story, I am sure.

But when they came they did not go straight to Bethlehem, but to Jerusalem. That was the city of the king, and they thought they should find the new-born King there. When Herod heard of their coming he was troubled, because he was afraid this new King, Whom he did not know, was going to take his throne away from him. He sent for the Wise Men, and asked them all about this new King. When they left Jerusalem and went to Bethlehem to find Him, Herod told them to be sure to come back and tell him where the King was, that he might worship Him as they did.

But GOD knew that Herod did not want to worship, so He told them not to go back to him, but to return into their own country by another way. This made Herod very angry. He was a very cruel man, and never cared what harm he did, or what sorrow he gave to others. He was afraid of Jesus, and would kill him if he could. He sent his soldiers to Bethlehem to kill every little boy under two years old, thinking that if he did this he would be quite certain to kill JESUS among them.

But he did not kill Him, for GOD had foreseen

that Herod would do this, and the night before the soldiers came, He told Joseph to take the Holy Child and His Mother and go away. Joseph got up in the middle of the night and told the Blessed Mary, and they went away, far, far off, quite into the land of Egypt, that they might be safe from Herod. Just as He put it into the hearts of the parents of little Moses to preserve his life, so GOD taught Joseph what to do to keep the Holy Child from the power of His enemies.

The story of Moses, like some other of our Old Testament stories, is not exactly the same as anything in the life of Jesus Christ. No one story can tell us all about our Lord's life. But they are all types, or illustrations, in some way. They all make us think of His life, and all taken together would, if we could understand them rightly, tell us of the whole life that Jesus lived for us.

These two stories, of the saving of Moses and the deliverance of the Holy Child Jesus from the power of Herod, teach us of GOD'S wisdom and love. And they are stories that are especially good for little children to remember. GOD cares for and watches over little children. There is none so tiny that GOD cannot see him. We belong to GOD, as Moses did. He was in the court of Pharaoh, where there was a great deal that was wrong going on ; and GOD'S children are now in the world, which is so full of sin, but He can keep them from evil that they may grow up good.

And we do not know what is before the little ones, what they will be and do when they grow up, but GOD knows. He knows just what He wants them to do, and He will give them the very things that will help them best to do this.

If a little child is in any danger, it can remember GOD will take care of it; no one will hurt it without GOD'S leave.

I remember hearing of some children who had learnt this lesson well and trusted GOD. They lived in one of the western states of America, very far from any homes except the two or three gathered together at this little station in the wild country. One day it happened that all the grown-up people had gone away from home, and the children, five or six in number, were left alone. When they were playing about, they suddenly saw a band of Indians coming. They were very much frightened, for some Indians are very savage, and will kill or carry off poor little white children. It so happened that these were friendly Indians, perhaps Christians; but the children did not know that. They looked everywhere for some one to help, but there was no one in sight—all were gone. There seemed to be nothing left for them to do but to die. On Sunday nights they were accustomed to sing hymns to JESUS CHRIST, and now they thought of Him and His love. They went out before the house, and, kneeling down in a circle in the very front of the Indians, they put their hands together and began to sing a hymn—

"'Hold the fort, for I am coming,'
Jesus signals still."

And so they put themselves under His care to protect them. Was not that a beautiful thing to do?

Now, as I said, there was no danger, but the children did not know that. But would not GOD the Father and our Lord JESUS CHRIST be pleased, as they looked down from Heaven and saw these little ones, so full of love and trust, kneeling quietly there?

We may trust GOD to care for us in danger. He loves us.

And so, too, if a little child's life is very different from the lives of other children, it can think, "GOD is getting me ready for something He wants me to do. GOD is my Maker: JESUS is my Saviour and my King. I will try my best to please Him now, and by-and-by I shall see what He wants me to do. Every great man and woman that ever lived was once a little child like me. All GOD's Saints were children too. Perhaps I shall never be great in this world, but I may be among GOD's Saints. If I am true to Him now, He may use me as He did Moses, to save some one else from great trouble or from sin. But if He does not do that, He will certainly give me a place in the House of JESUS my King."

DANIEL AND HIS THREE FRIENDS IN BABYLON.

The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.

DANIEL AND THE THREE CHILDREN AT BABYLON: AND OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST AT NAZARETH.

DANIEL i. 8–16. S. LUKE iv. 16–22.

WHEN Almighty GOD brought the Children of Israel from Egypt into Canaan, He gave them a warning. He told them that so long as they were good and worshipped Him, their enemies would have no power to hurt them; but if they disobeyed Him and worshipped false gods, He would be obliged to withdraw His favour from them; they would be attacked by enemies, and all be led away again from the good land He had given them, to be slaves to a strange people.

You would think they would never forget this, but they did. The new generations who were born did not remember what great things GOD had done for their forefathers, and how He had brought them out of Egypt. They worshipped false gods, and both kings and people became very wicked.

Then GOD'S word came true. They were all led away by the soldiers of their enemies, and were made captives, not in Egypt, where they were

before, but in the land of Assyria and in the city of Babylon. They stayed there a great many years.

One thing in particular, which they would feel as a great disgrace, GOD had said would happen. He said that their princes, the sons and relations of their kings, would be made slaves to the King of Babylon, and would have to wait upon the king at table, standing always before him to receive his orders. This came true, as well as the other things GOD had said. It is about some of these princes that we are to read to-day.

The King of Babylon told Ashpenaz, the man who had charge of all the servants in the king's house, to choose out some boys from among the captive Children of Israel. He was to choose the good-looking boys, and those who were clever and quick to learn, and especially he was to take those who were of the royal or king's family. They were to be brought into one of the houses of the king, and be well fed and cared for, and to be taught the language of the country and many other things, so that at the end of three years they might be ready to go to the king, and would make him useful servants. Ashpenaz chose them out, and appointed a steward called Melzar to take care of them.

We do not know the names of all the boys chosen, but among them were four whose names were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. These four seem to have been special friends, and Daniel was a sort of leader among them. They

were very good boys. Though they were captives in a strange land, and the people round them were very wicked and worshipped idols instead of GOD, they made up their minds that nothing should make them turn away from Almighty GOD and become bad like others.

So they were brought into the king's house, and food was sent to them out of the king's own stores.

But Daniel and his friends would not touch this food; they said it would be very wrong for them to do so. Does this seem strange? The reason, I think, was this. Some of the food—not all of it, perhaps—had been offered to the idols, and it was not right for any of the children of GOD's people to have anything to do with idols. It was something like this. When you go to table to your meals, before you begin to eat, you say grace—you bless the food in GOD's Name, or you ask GOD to bless it for you. Now, suppose, instead of saying grace or asking GOD's blessing, you were to hold up the food before an idol and ask him to accept it, and to give you his blessing while you eat it, would not that be wrong? So these four boys said to Melzar, "We will not eat this food; it would not be right for us to do so."

When Melzar heard this he was afraid. He was very fond of these boys, especially of Daniel, and he would like to please them. But then, if they were not well fed they would be thin and look sick, and then the king would be very angry and

say that Melzar had not taken proper care of them, and perhaps his head would be cut off. He did not know what to do.

But Daniel was not afraid; he knew that GOD could take care of them. So he said to Melzar, "Let us try for ten days. Take away all this beautiful food and this wine, and let us have nothing but pulse and water, and see if we are not as well as all the other boys; if not, you can make us eat the king's food." Now, this was a bold thing to say, for pulse is only beans, or corn, or something of that kind. Beans are good sometimes, but who would like to live always, and expect to get fat, on beans and cold water?

This is what our picture shows us. There are the four boys, Daniel standing a little in front of the others, and Melzar is before them with a tray of rich fruit and wine and other things very good to eat. Behind him there is a little slave boy, carrying a large basin of pulse. It is as if Melzar was trying to prove them, whether they really meant it—whether they would refuse all this beautiful food when it was brought to them, and choose the beans instead. But they did mean it, and so Daniel stands holding up one hand, as if saying to Melzar, "Take all those things away," and reaching out towards the slave with the other hand, ready to take from him the bowl of pulse.

Melzar saw they were in earnest, and so let them have their own way; I suppose he was sure that, in any case, ten days of this food would not hurt them.

At the end of the ten days what did he find? "Their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat." Melzar did not trouble them any more. He took away all the rich food, and let them have only the plain pulse, which they could eat with a good conscience and ask GOD to bless for them.

Don't you think this was very brave of them? They stood up alone in front of all the other boys, who were willing to eat the king's food. They did not care what the other boys thought or said of them; they would be true to GOD.

And in doing this they risked a great deal. Melzar might have got into trouble on their account, and lost his place, or been put to death, if things had gone wrong with them. But they said, "We will leave it all to GOD. GOD will take care of us; and if not, it will be better to be thin and weak, better for Melzar, even to suffer, than for us to do what is wrong and sin against GOD."

You have heard that GOD was pleased with them. He did more for them than make them fair and fat in flesh. He made them wise, and gave them honour in the sight of the king. But far more than that, He gave them strength against temptation. They were terribly tempted in their after lives, even threatened with death unless they did wrong. But they never failed. All through their lives they were true to GOD. They began as boys to be firm in doing right, so when they were men they were

able to resist all evil and live to the glory of GOD in the wicked city of Babylon.

Why, that was like JESUS CHRIST at Nazareth! Yes. If any of you have thought of that for yourselves, I am glad. But there may be some who do not know what we mean when we say that, so we must explain a little.

Our Lord JESUS CHRIST was taken into Egypt when He was a little Child, because Herod wanted to kill Him. When Joseph brought Him back from Egypt, he was afraid to take JESUS and His Mother to Bethlehem because Herod's son was king, and was as bad as his father. So he asked GOD where he was to go, and GOD sent him to Nazareth, a little town in Galilee. This became their home, and JESUS CHRIST grew up at Nazareth. He was often afterwards called a Nazarene. In the early days of the Church, CHRIST'S disciples were also called Nazarenes. This was intended to mock them, and make it appear that they were not good. We shall understand this better if we think of Nazareth and what kind of place it was.

Nazareth was a very wicked place. I do not know what made it so, but every one else thought the people of Nazareth bad. When a very good man first heard of JESUS CHRIST, and that He had come from Nazareth, he could hardly believe it, and said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Just, then, as the four boys we have been thinking of were taken to live in wicked

Babylon, so JESUS lived in wicked Nazareth. He lived there for thirty years. Let us think of Him as a Boy.

There must have been many bad boys in Nazareth. When He was quite a little boy and began to go to school, they must have teased Him and tried to make Him like themselves. Perhaps they hid His book away, or spoilt the tablet on which He learnt to write. Very likely they tried to persuade Him to stay away from school, and go after some pleasure with them. But to all these temptations He said "No;" and when they tried to provoke and tease Him, we may be quite certain that He was quiet and gentle, and only turned away from their teasing with a smile. Perhaps sometimes He would refuse to do things that were wrong, saying that His "Mother did not wish it." We know that He asked her before He went anywhere or did any particular thing all the while He was a boy, for we are told He was *subject* unto her. If they laughed at Him because He obeyed His Mother, it made no difference; He would not be disturbed at that.

When He grew up to be a Man, He kept Himself from all the evil men of the place; and we are told it was His custom to go to the synagogue on every Sabbath day, and to take His part in the service by reading the law. This He did because it was GOD'S Will. He would do GOD'S Will, though the men of Nazareth did not. They were very irreligious, and they did not believe truly in Almighty

GOD. Afterwards, when Jesus came there and began to preach in GOD'S Name, they tried to kill Him; and He could not do many miracles there, as He did in other places, because they were so unbelieving. Perhaps one reason why they hated and tried to kill Him was because He was so much better than they.

Very likely His being so different from others made Him live very much alone; the others would not care for His company. Very likely He had to give up a good many things that might have been pleasant to Him, but He was as ready to give them up as the four boys were in Babylon. He would not mind what He gave up, or what He suffered. At any cost He would keep from sin. So all through His life at Nazareth, as well as afterwards, there was no fault in Him.

And now let us think of ourselves. We are living in a world that is not all good; indeed, sometimes it may seem to us as if the place we have to live and work in is as bad as Nazareth or Babylon could possibly be. And yet we have to be good. We cannot go out of the world, but we are to keep from the evil of it.

This may mean that we have to give up a great many things, perhaps even to give up friends. You might know some *boy* who was a very clever boy, full of fun, and yet a bad boy. He might have some bad habit which he was teaching to the boys around him. If you want to keep from evil

you must have nothing to do with him. There may be some *place* which you like to go to, but if you do you will hear things that are wrong. Then you must not go. We may have to give up some *books* which have bad things in them, or to deny ourselves in some things to *eat* and *drink* because we might get too fond of them, and so eat and drink too much.

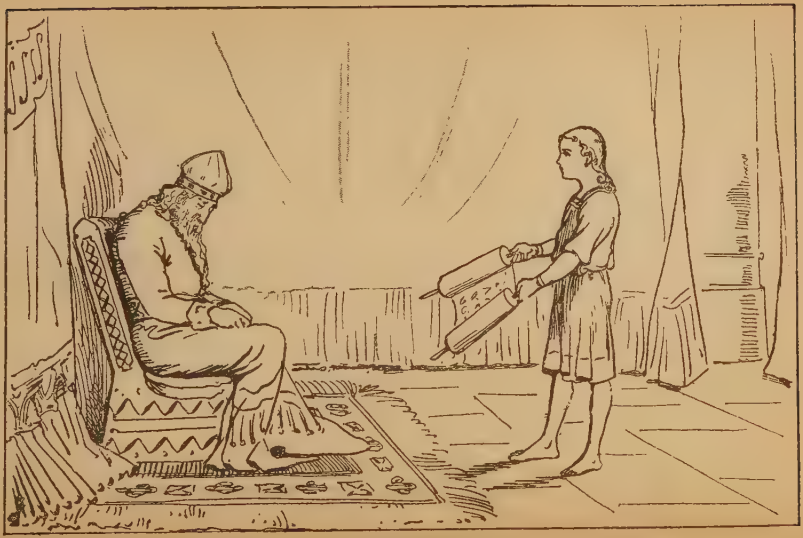
The life of a child who wants to keep from evil in this world is in some ways a hard one. He must always ask, before he makes friends, "Ought I to make friends with these children, or these people?" and if he finds that they do not love GOD, nor try to live for Him, then he must give them up. So perhaps he will have few friends. And perhaps he may have to suffer something. Children in some of our big cities have borne a great deal rather than do wrong.* Sometimes they have even made enemies by trying to be good.

In a small town in England there was a boy who worked in a printing office, where the men used to swear a great deal. This boy would not swear. Most of the men let him alone, but there was one very bad man who wanted to make the boy as bad as himself. One day he called him and made him stand before him—"Now, you swear as I do." The boy said nothing. "Don't you hear me? I told you to swear." "I will not swear," he

* Beautiful stories for children are "Froggy's Little Brother," by Brenda; and Mrs. Sewell's ballad, "Mother's Last Words."

answered. "Then, take that;" and he struck him a blow that nearly knocked him down. Next day he did the same, and a third day too, only on that he beat the boy with a stick. But he never made the boy swear. At last some one told the foreman, and the man was sent away.

Now, none of you children may ever have to bear anything like that. Still it will be in some way hard if you really mean to keep from evil in this world. When you are tempted, think of those four brave boys in Babylon, and, still more, think of JESUS CHRIST at Nazareth. You would like to be as brave as those boys. Well, JESUS knows your temptations, because He has been tempted in the same way, and if you think of Him and ask His help He will give it to you. If JESUS CHRIST is on your side, no one else can hurt you. Put yourselves on His side, and He will certainly be on yours, not only while you are children, but all your lives through. Be true to Him now, and you will grow stronger and stronger, and at last, whatever temptations come to you, you will be able, like those boys, to say that you will rather die, rather be burnt in a furnace or thrown to wild beasts, than do anything that would be disloyal to JESUS your King.



SAMUEL BEFORE ELI.

Septuagesima Sunday.

SAMUEL LEARNING FROM ELI THE PRIEST: AND OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST AMONGST THE DOCTORS.

1 Sam. i. 24–28. S. Luke ii. 42–47.

Some of you will remember one of our Advent lessons, the one about a little boy to whom God came at night and told him that He was going to judge those who did evil in His house. We will think a little more about this boy.

The picture shows him standing before Eli, very much as we have seen him once before.

Eli was the priest who had the care of God's Tabernacle at Shiloh. Samuel's mother had given him to Almighty God, that he might be His son and servant always. In order to do this, she had brought him to Shiloh when he was quite young, and left him there under the care of Eli. It was Samuel's work to sweep out the Tabernacle, to light the lamps at night, and to do everything else that Eli told him to do.

But Samuel was not always going to be a servant in the Tabernacle. God meant to make him a great prophet; that is, a teacher who should go about and teach the people in God's Name, and

who should have power to do great works—miracles, we call them—in GOD's Name, and could foresee things before they happened.

But if he was to teach others, he must be first taught himself. This was one of the reasons why GOD put it into Hannah's heart to bring her little son to Shiloh and leave him there with the priest. It was part of the duty of the priest to teach the people. The Book of the Law was kept in the Tabernacle, and when the people came there to sacrifice, the priests would teach them what the sacrifices meant, and what the whole Law of GOD was. So Samuel was brought to Shiloh that he might receive instruction from the priests, and then he would know GOD's Will when he was sent to speak to others.

This brings us to our picture. Now, let me say here that this picture does not tell us of something that we know actually happened, but only of something that may have happened. Some of it is true, and all the rest very likely is. You will see in a minute what I mean.

Let us look now. Eli is sitting in his seat in a quiet place, perhaps at the door of the Tabernacle. Samuel is standing before him with a book in his hands. But it does not look like a book. No, for the books in those days were very different from the books we have now. They were not made of separate leaves bound together, but were one long strip of skin. This strip of skin, or parchment, as it is called, on which all the book

was written with a pen—for there was no printing then—was fastened to two rollers, one at each end. The writing was in columns, perhaps as wide as the page of one of our books. The reader unrolled the strip far enough to see one column. When he had read that, he unrolled another, and as fast as he unrolled from one roller he rolled up on the other. So Samuel stands with the two rollers in his hands, and the book, or roll, open at the place where he has been reading to Eli.

He stands as if he had been just reading, and had stopped to ask Eli some question about the meaning of what he had read, that it might be explained to him, just as children ought always to do when they study their lessons, so that they may be sure they understand them.

Now, I think we can all remember what sort of a man Eli was. The priests who served in GOD'S Tabernacle, who offered the sacrifices there, and had always to be thinking about the things of GOD, ought to have been among the best of men. But Eli was not this. He did not love GOD'S house; he only thought of making himself rich.

Do you think that such a man would really care to teach Samuel the Law of GOD? I am afraid not. In our picture he seems as if he had fallen fast asleep while Samuel was reading to him. We are not told that he really did this, yet we may feel almost certain that he did. You see, children, his heart was not in what he was doing. He did not care about the Law of GOD; he knew it all, and he

had not kept it. Whether he went to sleep or not, he could have taken very little interest in Samuel or his learning. No one who does not love what he has to teach can teach well; he will soon get tired, and not really care whether the children who come to him learn or not.

But Samuel stands waiting respectfully before Eli. He looks a little puzzled. He does not know whether to go on reading or not. He does not want to think anything wrong of Eli, GOD'S priest, and yet it seems strange that he should care so little about the Law of GOD. It must have been rather hard for Samuel to go to Eli for his teaching. He knew that he was not good, and he had heard that GOD was going to punish him and his family for their sins.

Yet we do not hear that Samuel was disrespectful or saucy to him. GOD had sent him to Eli to learn, and so he would learn all he could. He obeyed all his words, he did all the work Eli gave him to do, and he learnt all he could from Eli. Eli was not a good man, but still he was the one under whom GOD had put Samuel to learn, and for this reason he would always treat him with respect. If at any time it seemed to him that Eli's acts contradicted his words, he would think that he was not there to copy Eli's example, but to receive his teaching, and he would know that, whatever example he might see, if he was only true to the word of GOD which he received, it would not be possible for him to do what was wrong.

There is another Boy we love to think and talk of, and He too went to the Temple to ask questions and learn the Law of GOD—the Boy CHRIST JESUS, the children's King.

I think every child who reads this book must remember something about that. JESUS lived at Nazareth with Joseph and the Blessed Mary. Every year they went up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover, a feast that was kept just at the time we now keep Easter. When He was twelve years old, JESUS went with them. They kept the feast, and left Jerusalem to go home. But JESUS did not go back with them. Thinking that He was with the other boys who made up the large party in which they were travelling, they did not miss Him until night. Of course they turned back to Jerusalem at once, but it was three days before they found Him. And in what a strange place it was in which He was found! At least, it would seem strange to us if we did not know what sort of Boy He was. He had not gone to play with other boys. He was not wandering about, looking at all the sights of the great city of Jerusalem, which would seem wonderful to any ordinary boy coming for the first time from the little country town of Nazareth. He was in the court of the Temple. And He was not simply sitting there, nor was He at play or resting. He had gone to where the doctors of the Law had a kind of school for boys. The boys came every day, and sat round in a circle on the ground, and the doctors read the Law to them and explained

it and asked them questions, and let the boys ask questions if there were any things they did not know or wanted to have made clear to them.

Now, these doctors of the Law were not all good men; we are told of them that they did not themselves keep the Law which they taught. But still JESUS CHRIST paid them proper respect. He came as a learner, for though He was the Son of GOD, and knew all things, yet when He was Incarnate and came into this world He took a human body and mind just like ours, and His human mind had to develop itself just like the mind of any other boy. So He went to these doctors. It was the duty of a boy to receive teaching from those whom GOD had appointed to teach the Law to His children. He listened to them carefully and answered their questions, and when they let Him He asked them questions in return. They were surprised at His questions, because they showed how thoughtful and pure He was. They could not understand what kind of Boy He was. He seemed different from others; perhaps some of them felt a little ashamed because He seemed so much wiser than they.

JESUS, as I say, paid them respect. By-and-by, when He went about preaching, He would be able to point out their sins; but now He was only as a little Boy before them. He knew more than they, for He was the Son of GOD; but now He hid all that, and only let His human mind take in learning from the doctors of the Law and the other teachers GOD had given Him.

This story of our Lord learning in the Temple is a very beautiful one. It makes us think of Samuel learning from Eli, but there is much more in it for us than that.

There is one great lesson which both these stories can very well teach children who are living in the world to-day—respect for those GOD sends to teach them.

Of course, the first persons we have to teach us are our parents. All parents who are trying to be good at all try to teach their children GOD'S Law, and even some parents who are not good will take pains to teach their children some good things which they do not do themselves.

Now, children, we must learn a lesson of respect for our parents from our Lord JESUS CHRIST. He was obedient to Joseph and Mary His Mother. Though He knew as Son of GOD far more than they, all that they could teach, He hid that away, and made his human mind quietly and respectfully learn from them. And children to-day should listen to their parents. They must be careful how they think or pretend they know more than father and mother; and even if it should happen that, as they grow older, or because they have had a better education than their parents, they really do know more, they must listen with respect to what their parents say.

And this is especially to be so when the parents teach their children about GOD, His law, and what He wishes them to do.

Of course, if it should happen that children see their parents doing things that are wrong, they cannot help feeling very sorry, and they must not imitate them, but still they must be respectful. For instance, if the mother taught her child to say prayers before going to bed, but the child knew the mother said none herself, that would not be a reason why she should refuse to say them; let her say them carefully, and add a prayer for mother. Or if the father were to tell the boys not to say bad words, and yet were to swear himself, the boys ought not to copy his example, but try to live up to what their father said, not let themselves down to do as he did. Perhaps when they see and hear the children doing right, the parents may begin to be better.

What I have said about parents is true of other teachers. Children who go to school must show respect to those who are set over them. No matter what we may think or know of our teachers, we must always be respectful.

And just the same with our Sunday school teachers. Parents cannot teach children all they ought to know, and so they send them to Sunday school. I am afraid a great many children don't show respect to their teachers in Sunday school. If they like them they do what they say; but if they don't like them, they forget all about respect and are very, very troublesome.

And then, besides, and in some ways above all, there are our priests. "The priest's lips shall

keep knowledge, and the people should seek the Law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts." This is what GOD says in His Word.

Samuel was sent to Eli the priest to learn. GOD gave His high priest a wonderful breastplate, upon which He could read GOD'S Will, and so teach the people rightly. We are to listen to GOD'S priests, whom He places in His Church to teach us.

Children don't always think of this, nor grown-up people either. When the priest is teaching the children as the Church tells him to do, how often they are fidgety and inattentive! When he asks them questions at catechizing, how little trouble they take to answer! They sit and look as if they were thinking of all kinds of things except of what the priest is saying. How often, when they go out of church, they forget all that was said. Sometimes they do worse than that: the older people—and the children catch it from them—talk over their priest, and, instead of treating him and his words with respect, make fun of them, turn them into a joke. This was not the way of Samuel. This was not the manner of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

If JESUS CHRIST is to be our King He must also be our pattern, for all the children in His Kingdom are to be like Him. Let Him teach us this lesson of respect. Like Him, and for His sake, be respectful to those set over you. Be sure

that if you reverence those whom He sends, He will accept the reverence as if it were given to Himself, and you will learn every day better how to reverence JESUS Himself, your SAVIOUR and your KING.

JONAH PREACHING IN NINEVEH.

Sexagesima Sunday.

THE PREACHING OF JONAH: AND THE WORK OF S. JOHN BAPTIST.

JONAH iii. 1–10. S. MATT. iii. 1–6.

IN the days long ago, Almighty GOD would choose men out to do special works for Him. His voice came to them and called them to separate themselves from other people and prepare for their work, and then go and do it in GOD'S Name. These men were called *prophets*. All prophets were not the same; they did not all have the same kind of work to do. Sometimes their work was only to explain the law—to teach GOD'S people His Will. Others of them seem to have been especially called to write or sing Psalms and sacred poetry. Others were able to tell of things that were going to happen a long time before they came to pass. These last are what we generally mean when we speak of prophets. Sometimes GOD taught them of things that would happen, so that they might go and tell people of them, and so lead them to do something GOD wished to be done. We will learn about one of these prophets to-day.

There was a very great city called Nineveh, in

which the people did not worship the true GOD. They worshipped false gods, some of them being only like the beasts and birds of the earth. Almighty GOD wanted to call the people of this great city to Himself. If they did not serve Him they would be destroyed, like so many other cities in the world. But, if possible, GOD wished to spare them. What a grand thing if such a great city could be brought back to the true GOD! Only think, there were more than one hundred and twenty thousand little babies in it at that time! How many people there must have been! How beautiful if all those babies could be brought up in true religion and the fear and love of GOD!

Almighty GOD would try. So He chose out a prophet called Jonah, and sent him to Nineveh. He was to go and preach in the streets of Nineveh, and say, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." GOD would give them forty days to repent of their sins, and if they did not hear His word the city would be destroyed GOD was very good to them.

Now, this Jonah, the prophet whom GOD sent, was not at all a great or brave man. He did not want to go. Perhaps he thought it was a long journey, and he was lazy, or perhaps he was afraid of the people, thinking that, as they were wicked people, they would stone him to death if he came with such a message as that; but the chief reason was that he thought, if he went and preached as GOD told him, the people would repent and the

city would not be destroyed, and then people might have said that it never would have been, and that he was no prophet. He would rather that the whole great city should perish to prove him a true prophet, than that they should repent of their sins and be forgiven. And so he would not go, but ran away elsewhere.

I wonder why GOD chose a man like that, instead of some really good strong man who would have obeyed at once? Don't you think that GOD did it for our sake? If all the people we hear of as being used by GOD for His work were great and strong, we might think, "Then GOD has no use for me; I am weak and can do so little, and I am always afraid." GOD wants to teach us that He can use the weak and timid as well as others. If He wants us He will call us, and whatever He tells us to do we shall be able to do it.

Well, Jonah was a weak and a selfish man, and tried to run away from GOD. That was foolish of him, for no one can get out of GOD'S sight. He got into great trouble by this, and was cast into the sea and nearly lost his life. But we will not think of this now, as it will come into another lesson.

GOD spared his life, and brought him back to his own country. Then Jonah did not put off any longer, but went at once to do what GOD told him to do. He went to Nineveh, and began to preach.

What a strange sight it must have been to the people of Nineveh, to see this man from another

country, dressed in the rough garments of the prophets, going up and down the streets of their beautiful city! And how strange to hear his words! He had only one message, which he repeated again and again—"Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." As he went along, the people stopped to listen, on their way to market or to business. Going about their work in the houses, they stopped and came to listen to these strange words. We may be sure, too, that the children came, and mothers carrying their babies in their arms, and ran after him. Would not you, if you heard some one in the city in which you live going about crying out, "In forty days this city shall be destroyed"? I dare say many of the children were very much frightened.

Nineveh was a very large city, and it would have taken Jonah more than three days just to go round it. He went into it, and walked about for a whole day, crying out the same words wherever he went.

At the end of the day, when a great many people had heard and seen him, some one went and told the King of Nineveh about this strange man and his words. Very likely the king sent for Jonah and talked with him, and Jonah told the king what GOD had said. Perhaps he told the king how he had tried to run away, and how GOD had caught him and brought him back.

When the king heard he believed it all, and he got down from his throne and took off all his beautiful robes. He covered himself with a common

sackcloth, and commanded his people to do the same. He sent messages all through the city, proclaiming a fast. No one was to eat or drink, not even the beasts and cattle. No one was to do any work or take any pleasure, but all were to cry out to GOD that He would pardon their sins and spare their city.

When Almighty GOD saw this He was pleased with them, and said He would spare them. So He forgave their sin, and did not destroy the city. The king and the people were very thankful; GOD was very good to them.

This beautiful story teaches us how loving Almighty GOD is to those who truly repent of their sins, as well as how surely He will punish those who will not listen to Him. So He teaches us that we ought to repent of our sins, that we may be forgiven.

But have children any sins to repent of? What do you think yourselves about this? Little babies are born in sin, original sin, as it is called. When they are baptized, this is taken away. But how soon they begin to do wrong themselves! Cannot some of the children who read this remember that when they were quite little bits of things, scarcely able to walk, they wanted to do naughty things? Think of all the crossness and bad temper; think of all the disobedience and the sulkiness when told to do something they don't like to do; think of all the sauciness and bad words, the quarrelling

with brothers and sisters, the little stories told, the unkind things said and done to other children; think of all the times they go to bed or get up without saying their prayers—they forgot, or they were tired, or they were too cross to say them. Oh yes, children have often a great many sins to repent of. And so GOD calls you to repent, dear children, that He may forgive you.

Well, but what is it to repent? To be very sorry. Yes, but that is not all. Suppose we said we were sorry for some things we had done, but would not tell what we had done, would not confess our fault, would that be real sorrow? Or suppose we were very sorry and confessed our sin, and then went away and did it over again, would that be true sorrow? No, I don't think so. Certainly we must not do the things again that we say we are sorry for. So, you see, to be really sorry—that is, to repent—includes three things. First, to be sorry; second, to confess our sin; third, not to do it again—to amend our lives. There are three words we use to express these things. Try and learn and remember them. Contrition, confession, satisfaction.

Lent is not very far off, when we shall learn something more about repentance; but we ought to repent all the year round, whenever we have done anything wrong. Try and think whether you have repented; I dare say you can remember some sin. Try and think, "Am I really and truly sorry for that sin?" Perhaps it was a lie,

perhaps a disobedience at home or at school. "Am I really sorry?" Then think, "Have I confessed it? Did I tell my mother? Did I tell the person I lied to? Did I go and tell my clergyman? Did I kneel down in my own room and confess it to Almighty GOD?" Then think again, "If I said I was sorry, did I go and do the same again? Have I done it over and over again, perhaps ever so many times? If I have, how can I say I am really sorry?"

The people of Nineveh were truly sorry. They wept, they confessed their sins, they put them away, and then GOD forgave them. Christian children ought to be as much in earnest in putting away their sins as the people of Nineveh. We must try, and we can be sure GOD will forgive.

But what has become of Nineveh, that great city? Is it gone, after all? Yes, it is quite, quite gone. There is nothing left of it now but heaps of earth, and the piles of bricks and stone which show where the temples and houses once stood. All else is gone. I am afraid the repentance of Nineveh did not last. It lasted some years, and then they fell into sin again, and GOD'S word came true, and the city and all the people were destroyed. Poor Nineveh! What a pity it was that they did not remember GOD'S goodness to them! Perhaps the city might have stood until to-day.

And Nineveh is not the only city that has passed away. In the Revelation of S. John, there are seven messages sent to the Bishops of the Churches

of seven towns in Asia Minor. GOD sent these messages by S. John to warn the people there that they were in danger of forgetting GOD and His Son JESUS CHRIST, and so of falling into sin. They did not listen, or they listened for a little while and then forgot again. The seven Churches are gone, the seven cities have been destroyed.

Children, it might be so with our own Church, with the city in which we live. When we think of these things we should pray for our own city, that the people in it may turn from sin, may truly repent, so that GOD'S judgment may not come down on the city we love.

But we must not quite forget our New Testament story. There is some one who is very like Jonah—indeed, his name sounds very much like Jonah. I mean S. John Baptist.

His message and work are very like that which GOD gave to Jonah, but he was a much stronger man. He was not afraid of any one, and he always did what GOD told him to do.

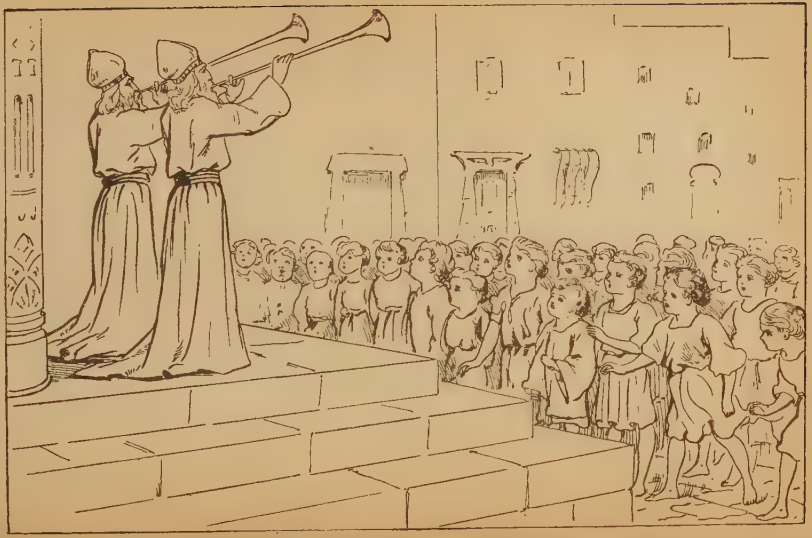
He was born when his father and mother were very old. He lived in the wilderness until he was thirty years of age, fasting and praying and learning the Will of GOD.

When he was ready, GOD sent him into Judæa to preach that every one must repent. JESUS CHRIST was already in the world, and the time would soon come when He would appear before all, and would go about setting up His Kingdom

and calling people into it. S. John prepared the way for CHRIST. Wherever CHRIST would come, John went, saying, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." When the people heard this, many of them repented of their sins. They were sorry for them, they confessed them to GOD; and then they went and confessed them to S. John, and he baptized them, and taught them how to amend their lives, and show their sorrow for sin by living good lives for the time to come.

JESUS is always at hand to hear us. He comes every day to see His children, to see how they live and what sins they commit. He does not want to punish them; He would rather they would repent and turn from all their wrong-doing. Children, we say we love JESUS CHRIST; do we really? Do we show our love by being truly sorry for our sins and putting them away?

Won't you try, each one of you? Think what your sins are. Ask GOD to give you true repentance, so that you may be the good and loving and pure children of JESUS your King.



THE CHILDREN CALLED TO FAST.

Quinquagesima Sunday.

THE CHILDREN CALLED TO KEEP THE FAST: AND JESUS FASTING IN THE WILDERNESS.

JOEL ii. 15–17. S. MATT. iv. 1, 2.

NEXT Wednesday is Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. How quickly it seems to come round! To-day we must learn about keeping Lent.

"But I thought we were to have an Old Testament lesson, and they did not keep Lent then; they never kept Lent until after JESUS CHRIST came."

If any children think this, they are quite right. Our Lord JESUS CHRIST was the first to keep Lent. He kept it for forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, eating no food, and being with the wild beasts.

And yet the Old Testament can teach us about keeping Lent if we think of how Lent is to be really kept.

Lent is a time for *fasting*—that is, for going without food. We cannot go without food altogether; we should die. But we can take a great deal less than we generally do, and we can give up a great many things that we are fond of. In this way we can fast.

"But does GOD want children to fast? Is not fasting only for grown-up people, or for those who have been very wicked and want to repent of their sins, like the people of Nineveh?"

That is a good question, and we must try and answer it. Let us see what the Old Testament says about it.

Look at your picture first. There are two men standing on some high steps—I think they must be the steps of the Temple. By their dress these men seem to be priests. And as they stand there they are blowing trumpets. In front of them are a great crowd of children. The children have heard the trumpets, and have come to see why they are blown. Children always run to listen when there is any music heard. When a band is going along the street, you always see children, boys and girls, going with it. I remember once when I was staying in a little country village, a man came into it with a barrel-organ. The little girl of the family came running to me. "Aren't you going to hear the music?" She could not understand that I had heard so many organs that I did not want to hear any more; she was very sorry not to go herself, but it was so hot her mother would not let her go out. Blowing trumpets or making music would be sure to bring the children together.

But there was something particular about these trumpets. They were made of silver, and they were blown by the priests. What do you think of that? What would you say if you saw your clergyman

standing on the steps of the church, blowing a trumpet? Would not you run? And would not you tell all the children you could find and bring them with you, boys and girls all running together? So when the priests blew, the children came.

I wonder if they knew why the trumpets were blown? Perhaps, if they did not know, they might have thought there was going to be a show, or perhaps that they were being called to a feast. Ah! it was not a *feast*, but a *fast*. Leaving out that little letter *e* makes a very great difference. The trumpets were blown to say that there was to be a fast.

But did the priests want the children to come. Let us see what GOD said.

The Children of Israel very often displeased Almighty GOD, though He had been so good to them. When they did this, He sometimes sent them punishments, that they might learn to think of Him and repent. Sometimes He sent prophets with messages, just as He sent Jonah to Nineveh. Once when they had been doing wrong, and great troubles were coming on the land, there was to be no harvest, and locusts and caterpillars were to come and eat up the green grass and trees. Then GOD sent a prophet called Joel to warn them.

And Joel told them to proclaim a fast. He speaks more than once. He says, "Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord

your GOD, and cry unto the Lord." Then he says, "Blow the trumpet in Zion; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble." Then once more—as if he wanted it to be quite clear who were to be called together, who it was that GOD wished to fast—"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly; gather the people, assemble the elders, gather the children and those that suck the breasts." The children, and even the little babies in their mothers' arms, were to be brought together, and all were to keep the fast.

So GOD does wish children to fast sometimes. You can quite see why they were called by Joel. If trouble came on the land, would not the children feel it; would not they suffer if there was no food? Perhaps the children too were learning wickedness from those who were older. They were all called, and it might be that their cry would be heard by GOD, and He might pardon the sins of the city; we remember that it was partly for the sake of the children that GOD spared Nineveh.

Don't you think the children obeyed what the priests said? If any one had said to them, "Come, let us go and have a feast to-day," don't you think they would have said, "What! have not you heard the silver trumpets? GOD says we are to fast, not feast. I cannot go with you"? We may be sure they would say this if they were good children, and wanted to please GOD their King. Our picture gives only children. I suppose that when the trumpets sounded the children would

run and get there first, but I hope that some of the grown-up people came too.

Now, we are not Jewish children. JESUS CHRIST is our King; does He wish His children to fast as GOD'S children did long ago? What does He say?

Did He not call them to Him, saying, "Suffer little children to come unto Me"? Why did He call them? Was it only that they might have a happy time and all kinds of pleasures? No, it seems to me He could not have meant that. Very soon after He called these children to Him and blessed them, perhaps on the very same day, He began to tell the people of the things He was going to suffer, and to tell them, too, that if they would follow Him they must suffer also. A great many times He said that whoever wanted to be His disciple and to be like Him, must take up His Cross and follow Him. He meant this for the children as well as the grown-up people.

Now, fasting and denying ourselves things that we like is one way of taking up the Cross. So when JESUS says, "Suffer little children to come unto Me," He really means, "Let them come and fast, and be ready to suffer with Me; let them take up their cross and follow Me."

If we really love JESUS CHRIST, we shall be ready to do this. It would be a very poor kind of love that only wanted to follow a friend and be with him when all was happy and bright. We don't want to give a poor love, half a love; we want to follow JESUS everywhere. When we were

baptized, the priest put the sign of the Cross on our foreheads—not a crown, but a cross—and he said we were to fight manfully under CHRIST'S banner unto our life's end. Now, the banner of CHRIST is the Cross. We are to bear this and follow Him.

Of course there are a great many crosses. Every suffering that comes to us, if we bear it patiently and willingly, may be the Cross of JESUS CHRIST.

But we are to speak to-day of one particular kind of cross—the cross that comes to us when we are told to deny ourselves, to keep a fast.

The particular fast we are called to keep is LENT, which, as we have been told, begins next Wednesday—Ash Wednesday. Lent, if it is well kept, makes us very like JESUS CHRIST. He first kept Lent. He had just been baptized by S. John the Baptist, and the Holy Ghost had come down upon Him, that John might know He was the Son of GOD, and then the Spirit led Him away into the wilderness. Forty days and forty nights He stayed there all alone. He had no pleasures, no friends, no food. Think how much He must have suffered! Wild beasts were round about Him in the wilderness. For thirty years since He was a Baby He had been with His Mother, loving her and receiving her love. How you would miss your mother! And ah! poor Mother, how she must have missed her Son! He had been her Comfort so long, and now He was gone, six weary weeks, and she did not know where He was; all she could

hear was that He had gone into the wilderness. What a cross Blessed Mary had to bear because she loved JESUS.

Now, don't you think we ought to keep Lent? If GOD called children in old times to fast, if JESUS calls His children to follow Him, and if He suffered and fasted for us, have we any excuse—that is, if we want to be like Him, have we any excuse for not fasting? I am afraid the only reason we could give is that we don't like it. Perhaps we ought to say that we are lazy. Can it be that we don't love JESUS CHRIST enough to be willing to suffer for Him?

If we are going to keep Lent, how shall we do it?

We must begin well. Begin on Ash Wednesday. I hope you may be able to go to Church—that there will be some service to which children can go. But if you cannot go to church, remember to put away all your pleasures, be sure to deny yourselves. Perhaps it may be hard to do this. I remember once, in the United States of America, the birthday of General Washington, the first president, came on Ash Wednesday. All the schools had a holiday, and of course there were a good many pleasures and entertainments going on. Now, that was hard. What should Church children do? Should they be thankful that it was a holiday, so that they could keep Ash Wednesday and fast, and begin Lent well? Or should they go with the other children to their

pleasures? It was a hard question for them to decide. I hope they decided rightly, and took up the Cross with JESUS CHRIST. Let us begin well.

But children cannot go without food very much. They are growing, and they run about so much that they really need it. Yes, and so the Church says they need not give up food. But they can make a difference. They can give up a good many things. No preserves, no sugar, no oranges, no candy, no sweet things such as children love; every child could find something to go without. Except, perhaps, the very poor. There are poor children who have very little food, and never have all these nice things. What can they do? They can give their little hearts to JESUS CHRIST. They can tell Him they have nothing to give up, they have so little; they are very sorry, if they could give up things for Him they would. JESUS knows all about this, and He will love them all the same, and He will help them to bear being poor, and still to be good for His sake.

But besides giving up, there are other things children can do. In a village I know in Devonshire, in England, a great many of the children pass the church on the way to school. The church door is always open, that people may go in and pray. Once in Lent a number of them resolved that they would go into church every morning and say a little prayer before going to school. During the first weeks of Lent there used to be a great many. Some, I am afraid, got tired or forgot it; but quite

on to the end of Lent, if I went into the church a little before nine, I would see a few, perhaps three or four, little figures kneeling quietly just inside the door, saying their prayer with JESUS. Some children might go to church every day, or two or three days in a week ; or, if they could not do that, all could say a little prayer at home. The Collect for *Ash Wednesday*, or the Collect for *Holy Innocents' Day*, or for the *Sixth Sunday after Epiphany*, if it was not so long, would be a good prayer to choose.

Think again what the people were called to do when the trumpets were blown, or when Jonah preached to them in Nineveh. They were to repent of their sins and put them away. Here is a good work for Lent. Every child who reads this book is old enough to have sins of his or her own, and is quite old enough to find them out and try to be sorry for them and try to put them away. Would not that be a capital thing to do in Lent? If a child who has a bad temper was to watch and pray, and keep it down all Lent, why, by Easter he might be a different child. If another who was untruthful, or deceitful at school, were to fight against this, what a change it might be! If another who had been disobedient and saucy at home were to try all Lent to be like JESUS with His Mother at Nazareth, what a happy home she might have, and when Lent was over and Easter come, how glad she and her father or mother might be!

Oh, there are plenty of ways of denying yourselves and being good, and following JESUS CHRIST, if you will only think of them. JESUS will teach you if you ask Him. Only think of Him, and pray to be made like Him. If you really love Him and remember that He fasted for you, you cannot help yourself—you must want to fast and be like Him. The true children of JESU's Kingdom will want to be with Him wherever He is, in fasting and suffering as well as in happiness and joy. WHAT WILL YOU DO TO KEEP LENT?

"Shall not we Thy sorrow share,
And from earthly joys abstain,
Fasting with unceasing prayer,
Glad with Thee to suffer pain?

"Keep, oh, keep us, Saviour dear,
Ever constant by Thy side,
That with Thee we may appear
At the eternal Eastertide."

EVE TEMPTING ADAM TO SIN.

The First Sunday in Lent.

EVE TEMPTING ADAM IN THE GARDEN: AND OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST TEMPTED IN THE WILDERNESS.

GEN. iii. 1–6. S. MATT. iv. 1–11.

FOUR days of Lent have passed already; how are we keeping it? We are to think of JESUS CHRIST our King fasting in the wilderness. Are we trying to be with Him; are we fasting? Do not forget the lesson of last Sunday.

But JESUS not only fasted. It would have been a great thing to suffer if He had done no more than sit quietly in the wilderness without food for forty days and forty nights, but He suffered more than that. He suffered temptation. Satan, the great evil spirit whom GOD made to be a good angel in His Presence, but who fell into sin and lost his brightness, came and tempted JESUS CHRIST. He tempted Him again and again, but he never made Him do wrong. We ought to remember this carefully, for Lent is not only a time of fasting—it is also a time of temptation. We are to think of this to-day.

Our Lord JESUS CHRIST was not the first Person

Satan tempted to sin; we must go a long way back to find the beginning of temptation.

Think of the Garden of Eden, that most beautiful garden which GOD Himself laid out and planted. There was in it every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; all kinds of flowers and fruits. GOD made this garden for man, and in it He put Adam and Eve, the first man and woman that He had made. Into this beautiful garden Satan came too.

He did not come looking like what he is, a spirit full of wickedness. Satan has a great deal of power, and he can change his form if he pleases. So he took the form of a serpent. Serpents must have been different then, much more beautiful to look at than they are now; and in this form of a serpent he was able to speak—to speak as if he were a friend.

He did not go to Adam, but to the woman, Eve. I suppose he thought he could more easily deceive her. He went to her and tried to persuade her to do something which GOD had forbidden. There was a tree in the garden, called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which GOD had said that Adam and Eve were not to touch. Satan came and whispered to Eve that that tree was beautiful to look at, and she went and looked at it. When she saw how good it was for food, she began to wish to touch it. Then Satan told her it would make her wise, and when she heard that she could no longer restrain herself. She took the fruit and

ate it. How Satan must have laughed to himself when he saw the first woman GOD made so easily deceived—when he saw her disobey Almighty GOD! She was tempted, and she fell into sin.

But now comes, I think, the worst part of this story—the very sad part.

When Eve had done this she saw at once how wrong she had been, but she was not sorry. She was all alone when she sinned—Adam her husband knew nothing about it; but now she planned in her mind to make him sin too. You see how wicked she had already become.

We may think of them as we see them in our picture. Eve is seated under the tree from which she has been gathering the fruit she was told not to touch; she seems to have been waiting for Adam to come to her. Adam comes to her through the bushes and flowers, and she at once begins to tell him about the fruit; that she has eaten it, and how good it was—that it would make him wise, as it had made her. If she told him this, she must have known then that she was telling a lie. She holds one of the fruit in her hand, and is offering it to Adam and tempting him to disobey GOD and to eat. Satan, in the form of a serpent, is just behind her, and he seems to be whispering in her ear, telling her what to say to Adam. I wonder what she said? Perhaps she told Adam that he did not love her; that if he did he would eat the fruit she held out to him.

And now, what ought Adam to have done? He

could not be true to GOD and please Eve as well. Which ought he to have chosen? Oh, how different all the world might have been if he had only chosen rightly! But he fell into the temptation: he wished to please Eve, he wanted to have this wisdom she told him of; he disobeyed GOD; he sinned. How dreadful this was! Eve was deceived by the serpent; Adam was not deceived. He must have seen that Eve was changed. He knew she had done wrong. Yet he chose her and wilfully turned away from GOD, and then came the power of Satan and of sin.

Of course punishment came on them. They were sent out of the beautiful garden; but that was a very small part of the punishment. When GOD made them He had given them His own life in their souls. When they sinned they lost this life; they went out into the world with dead souls—souls dead in sin. All sin that is now in the world has come from this. It has all come because the first man and woman disobeyed GOD—lost the life He had given them, and went out into the world with souls dead in sin. All this happened because they did not resist, but when they were tempted fell into the temptation.

Now come back to the temptation of JESUS CHRIST. How different it was! Adam and Eve were strong and well, they had all that they could possibly want, and they were in a beautiful garden. JESUS CHRIST was cold and hungry, and He was

all alone in a barren wilderness. Yet they fell into sin, while He resisted the tempter. We will think more of His temptation.

Satan may have tempted Him a great many times during the forty days. Very likely part of his temptation was to try and frighten JESUS CHRIST with the wild beasts, but there are three great temptations of which we are particularly told. We will learn something about each one.

Satan first came to JESUS CHRIST as a friend. Our Blessed Saviour was very hungry after His long fasting, and Satan came up to Him as if he pitied Him, and gently said to Him, "You are very hungry, but You are the Son of GOD. If You are the Son of GOD, turn these stones into bread." Of course JESUS could have done this quite easily—He had power to do it because He is GOD; but it would have been wrong to do it, because it would have been against the Will of GOD the Father, Who had sent Him into the world to suffer, and not to take any advice or help from Satan. So JESUS resisted that temptation.

Now, if we are keeping Lent with JESUS CHRIST we shall be tempted too. And very likely we shall be tempted in something the same way that He was. Satan may come to us as a friend, and he may try to persuade us to do something that would be very pleasant to ourselves. He will try this because he will think it an easy thing to make us do.

Suppose a child had made the resolution, "I will not eat any candy or oranges, or take any sugar all Lent. These are all very good, but I am going to deny myself; I am going to fast to-day like JESUS CHRIST." And suppose that at the end of a week Satan were to whisper in his heart, "Is not a week long enough to go without these things? They are very nice; they will do you good if you eat them." Perhaps the child might stop and look into a shop-window where they were. This would be a temptation of Satan, to make him break his promise to GOD!

Or there might be some things near us which were very pretty to look at and nice things to have—ribbons or ornaments for girls, toys of some kind for boys. It is lawful for boys and girls to have these things, but if Satan told us to steal them because we wished for them, that would be temptation, because it would be to get them in a way that was not GOD'S Will.

I do not mean, of course, that we should see Satan or hear his voice. But all evil comes from him. It might be the voice of another child that spoke to us, some well-dressed, well-behaved child; we should never think of Satan when we saw him. But just as Adam was tempted by Eve his wife, whom he loved, so Satan uses our dearest little friends to lead us wrong. Do let us always remember, whenever we are asked to do wrong, no matter who asks, "This is Satan's temptation, I must not do it; it is against the Will of GOD."

The second temptation of JESUS CHRIST was quite different. We all know that JESUS came to be our King. But He came poor and full of sorrow and suffering. Now, people in the world don't want a poor king, nor a sorrowful one; they want one who is full of power and strength—who can make promises and give rewards. Satan knew something of why JESUS had come, and he knew that if He was poor and came as One Who had been brought up to be a Carpenter at Nazareth, the people would not be likely to receive Him. So He took JESUS to the top of the Temple at JERUSALEM, when all the people were gathered in the court below—perhaps they were all at a sacrifice —and told Him to throw Himself down. He said that if He was the Son of GOD He would be quite safe; the Angels would take care of Him. This was as if he had said, "If You will do this You will show Your power. The people will see that You are the Son of GOD—they will take You for their King; You will not have to suffer. And You see there is no danger, for the Angels will keep You safe."

But again JESUS refused to do what Satan wanted Him to do. It would have been tempting GOD to have put Himself in the way of danger, unless GOD had commanded it, and He would not do anything to save Himself one bit of suffering.

The children of JESUS CHRIST may be tempted something in this way too. They might be tempted to go into some place of danger, and

think they would come to no harm. There might be some place of amusement where bad people went, and where bad things were seen and done, and a child might be tempted to go—"Oh, you are GOD'S child; He will take care of you, you will not come to any harm."

Or the temptation might be to read some bad books, or to look at bad pictures, and to think, "These things won't hurt me; they might hurt some people, but I know better."

Now, GOD has not promised to take care of us if we put ourselves in dangerous places. If you were to jump off the church tower you would not expect to come to the ground without being hurt, and if you go into the way of sin you must not expect that GOD will keep your soul pure. So you must not give way to these temptations.

Of course, it is sometimes hard to resist. If you don't do these things, Satan may say through some one else, "Oh, you are a coward, you daren't do them!" Well, no one likes to be called a coward. Or he might say, "Oh, you are afraid of your mother!" and a big boy might not like that. But still it is better to be called names than to do wrong. "No, I am not a coward; but I am afraid of grieving my mother, I am afraid of displeasing GOD. I will not listen to Satan; I will not tempt GOD."

There was a third temptation for JESUS in the wilderness. Satan took Him up to a high

mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and said he would give it all to JESUS if He would only fall down and worship him. In this temptation, too, Satan was pretending to be a friend. All the world belonged to JESUS CHRIST, but it was under Satan's power because of sin. JESUS had come to fight against Satan and take away all his power, and Satan would fight against JESUS and would get the Jews to crucify Him. Now he says, "I will not fight against You, I will not stir up any enemies or trouble; I will let You have the kingdom of the world, but You must take it as a gift from me, and I will give it if You will worship me."

But would JESUS bow himself before Satan? Oh no! He turned upon him and said, "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy GOD, and Him only shalt thou serve." Then Satan fled away, and left Him in peace.

A temptation something like this one might have come into a child's life. There might be some big boy at school who was always teasing a little one. He might some day say to the little one, "Now, if you will do something bad to please me, I will not tease you any more." Or it might be in this way. Some girl might go to another girl who loved her, and say, "I want to see if you really love me. If you do, you will do this thing to please me. I know it is not right, but if you love me you will do it. If you don't do it, I shall not love you any more."

If you give way, if, for the sake of not being teased, or for the sake of having some one's love, you do what is wrong, you do the very thing Satan tried to make our Lord do. It would be like worshipping this other child instead of worshipping GOD.

We must, then, make up our minds that we shall be tempted in Lent, perhaps all through Lent, and perhaps all through our life afterwards. But don't let us be afraid. JESUS our King has borne all our temptations before us, and He will stand by His children and help them now. We can look up to Him and pray to Him, and then all will be well.

> "Or if Satan, vexing sore,
> Flesh or spirit do assail,
> Thou, his Vanquisher before,
> Grant we may not faint or fail!"

ABRAHAM OFFERING HIS SON ISAAC.

The Second Sunday in Lent.

ABRAHAM OFFERING HIS SON ISAAC: AND JESUS GOING UP TO JERUSALEM TO SUFFER.

GEN. xxii. 1–12. S. MARK x. 32–34.

FORTY days and forty nights Lent will continue: so we are not far from the beginning of it still. Don't forget to put in nights as well as days; they are very important. Sometimes people are good all day, but bad when night comes. Children know this. When night comes, they don't want to go to bed, or they are tired and cross, and a good day is spoiled. When they have gone to bed, and are alone in their own rooms, Satan comes to tempt them. Indeed, we must be very watchful by night as well as by day.

But though it is still Lent, we need not think only of the fast which JESUS kept in the wilderness. There are many other things which JESUS did and suffered that we ought to know, and some of them His fast prepared Him for.

Remember, first, that JESUS CHRIST suffered everything willingly. He went into the wilderness

of His own Will, and He offered Himself to bear all that came after.

For He did suffer much more; His suffering did not end with Lent. All through His life He had pain and sorrow of one kind or another, and as He came near to the end His sufferings were more than we can tell. You know that the last week of Lent is called Holy Week, and the week before that Passion Week. In these weeks we especially think of the Passion—that is, the *Suffering*—of JESUS CHRIST, and His death on the Cross. But we will not wait for those weeks—we will begin to think of these things to-day; perhaps they will help us to keep Lent better.

It is very important that we should remember that our Lord JESUS suffered willingly. He knew beforehand all that was coming to Him. He could look forward and see the suffering before the time came.

What should we do if we knew that to-morrow we had to suffer some pain? We should wish to-morrow would not come, or that we could put it off. How unwilling we are to suffer! Perhaps a child has to go to a dentist to have something done to its teeth. Oh, what a fuss it sometimes makes! Perhaps it has to be bribed with some promise or present.

Our Lord knew the pain was coming; but He did not shrink back, He did not put it off. He even talked about it. Now, that is not what we would do. Should not we say, "Oh, well, don't

talk about it now; it will be bad enough when it comes?" What cowards we are!

But JESUS, when He walked with His disciples, talked of such things. Sometimes, we know, He pointed out the evening sky, and the birds and the flowers—the beautiful things of Nature, and taught His disciples how to learn about GOD from all of them; just as the hymn we sometimes sing teaches us—

> "There is a book, who runs may read,
> Which heavenly truth imparts,
> And all the lore its scholars need,
> Pure eyes and Christian hearts.
>
> "The works of GOD, above, below,
> Within us, and around,
> Are pages in that book to show
> How GOD Himself is found."

But besides these things, and especially towards the end of His life, He seemed to take pleasure in talking of the pains that were coming. He told them that when He came to Jerusalem He would be made prisoner, given up to the Romans, scourged, spit upon, and at last crucified, that He might die. He did not talk of these things as if He were afraid of them, but He walked on before His disciples as if He wanted to get quickly to Jerusalem, that He might meet them.

He did all this because it was His Father's Will. I said just now that He did it willingly. This is quite true, and yet it was a hard thing for Him to do. Can you understand that in JESUS CHRIST there were two Wills? He had the nature of GOD

and the Will of GOD, and that Will was entirely one with the Will of the Father. But He had also taken a human nature like ours, and in that nature He had a human will. Now, His Divine Will willed all these sufferings because it was the Will of GOD; and His human will willed them too, because it submitted itself to the Divine Will. All through His life, even when He was a little Child, JESUS had done this, He had made His human will obey the Divine; so when the suffering came He was able to accept it willingly, for it was the Will of GOD that He should. The Son of GOD has the same Will as His Father. The Son of Man gives up His will to the Father. So JESUS, GOD and Man, makes His two wills one to do the Will of GOD. In this he wants His children to be like their King.

But it is not easy to suffer willingly. Let us see if we can find some man whose example might help us, and who is also a type of JESUS in His suffering.

What does our picture show us?

There are two men going up a hill together. One is a very old man, and walks with a staff, and he carries some fire in his hand; the other is a young, strong man, perhaps about twenty-eight years of age. They are a father and son, and their names are Abraham and Isaac. The younger one, who carries upon his shoulder a large fagot of wood, seems to be pressing forward as though he were anxious to reach the hilltop. Where are they

going? They are going to the top of a mountain called Moriah. GOD has told them to go there and offer a sacrifice. In the days in which they lived, it was part of the worship of GOD to offer burnt sacrifices to Him. An altar of stone or earth was built, a bullock or a lamb was killed, and then a fire lighted on the altar, and the body of the lamb burnt as an offering to GOD.

But there is no bullock or lamb in the picture; that seems strange. Isaac thought it strange too, for he said, "My father, behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham said GOD would provide a lamb. Isaac did not know just what Abraham meant, but he went on. When they reached the mountain-top, a strange thing happened. They built the altar, and laid the wood and fire all in order, and then Abraham told his son Isaac to lie down, for he was going to kill him and offer him a sacrifice to GOD.

This seems a terrible thing to do. Isaac was the only son of Abraham's wife, born when she and Abraham were very old. They were very fond of him, and, besides that, GOD had said that they should have from him grandchildren and great grandchildren, until the family were more than could be counted. Was Abraham really going to kill him? Yes, for GOD had told him to do so. We know now that GOD did not mean that he should really die. GOD was trying Abraham, to see if Abraham would really obey Him in everything. It was hard for Abraham to do; but he had brought his will into

obedience to the Will of GOD—he offered Isaac willingly. But how hard it was for Isaac! He was young and strong, with all life before him, and yet he must give himself up to die. He had not known what the sacrifice was to be, but now he knew. What should he do? He was young, and his father old, he could have run away; and if his father tried to force him to die, he could have overcome him—they were all alone. But no; he knew it was GOD'S Will, and so he gave himself up and laid himself down upon the wood to die.

What a parting that must have been! How that father and son must have felt when they stood face to face for the last time, and the son thought that in a few minutes he would be dead by his father's hand! It must have been an agony to them; but they were brave men, and they did not turn back from what they believed to be the Will of GOD.

But Isaac's offering was enough when he lay upon the wood; GOD did not take his life. An Angel came from Heaven and stopped Abraham with the very knife in his hand. He had done enough; GOD was pleased with his obedience. He was not to slay his son. There was a ram caught in a thicket near by, which he was to offer instead. How thankful they must have been! What a happy return home!

Now, Isaac is a type of CHRIST. You see at once why. He gave himself up to suffer and die at the will of his father—to die at the Will of GOD.

But both Abraham and Isaac are examples to us

of suffering willingly. Think of the suffering of Abraham as he went on his journey, and expected to come back without the son he loved so much. Think of Isaac as he laid himself down on the wood. What do we have to suffer in comparison with what they did? Yet they went willingly. Let us ask of GOD to help us to take patiently any suffering that may come upon us for his sake.

Of course, it is true that after all Isaac did not die on the altar; GOD saved him. But that does not make his offering any less. GOD often saves people when He sees that they have really given themselves up to His Will.

Some years ago a man in a hospital was very ill. The doctors said he would die if he did not have an operation, and even that might not save him. So the man prepared himself for death; the chaplain visited him, and he received the Blessed Sacrament, and then gave himself up to the Will of GOD. The day for the operation came, and the poor man was carried into the room and laid upon the table, and the surgeons got their instruments ready. Just as they were to begin, the man asked to see the chaplain again. He came in, and the man said, "Sir, I expect to die; will you say one more prayer with me?" Kneeling down by his side, in the midst of doctors, students, and nurses, the chaplain prayed that, if it were the Will of GOD, the man's life might be spared; and, if not, that his soul might pass pure into GOD's Paradise. Then the chaplain left him, and the

head surgeon took off the wrappings to perform the operation. But now, just as he was about to begin, he suddenly said, "Why, there has been a great change here; there is no need for an operation. The man will recover!" And so he did. GOD accepted his offering of himself, and for that time spared his life.

We must not expect that GOD will do this for all of us. What we have to do is to give ourselves up to bear hard things and any pain if it is GOD'S Will, and let GOD do with us as He sees best.

There is another thing that I think some of us might learn from Isaac—a lesson of sparing others from pain.

Suppose Isaac had refused to suffer; suppose, when his father wished him to lie down on the wood, he had resisted;—what pain he would have given his father! It was hard for Abraham to see his son suffer, but Isaac might have made it much harder. Might not we learn something from him?

Suppose father and mother want to keep Lent well, but the children at home are provoking, teasing, really naughty. How much harder that makes it for the parents! And not only father and mother, but other people who live with them. Perhaps the parents or others want to go to church, but they can't trust the children to be good at home —to stay in the house and be quiet. Does not that make it hard for them? Or if they are sick and in pain, and are trying to bear their pain patiently, if

the children make a great noise, is it easier to bear the pain? Perhaps a mother might be so vexed by the noise or bad conduct of the children that she might get angry, and so not be willing to bear the pain GOD gave her according to His Will. Cannot each child try not only to bear his or her own cross, but to help others to bear theirs bravely too?

Let me tell you a true story. There was a little girl who had a very lame foot that gave her a good deal of pain. It was so bad that a surgeon had to come and cut it to prevent its getting worse. Her mother was very ill in the house at the same time. When the surgeon came, they said to her, "Now, you must try and be a brave girl, and not cry or make any noise, lest your mother should hear. If she knows anything about it she may be frightened, and that will hurt her very much. She must not know anything about it till it is all over." The child promised she would try. She held her aunt's hand, and shut her teeth very close, and then the surgeon began. Oh, the pain was so bad! her face turned white, and the tears ran down her cheeks; but she never spoke. At last they heard a little crack, and something fell down. You would never guess what it was. This brave little girl had clenched her teeth so hard to keep her cries in, that she broke one of them short off, and it fell out of her lips. Now, was not that brave and good? The operation was finished, and she had made no sound—not one cry. When her mother

heard of it afterwards, don't you think she put her arm round her little girl and thanked her for sparing her pain?

JESUS calls His children to follow Him. Some of His people set us good examples. Even little children can suffer for His sake—can take up their cross and follow Him. Can you not say to Him, "*Lord JESUS, I am willing to suffer for Thee; I will follow Thee if Thou wilt help me. I will try and bear any cross it pleases Thee to give me.*"

ELIJAH FED WITH BREAD FROM GOD.

The Third Sunday in Lent.

ELIJAH FED WITH BREAD FROM GOD: AND THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

1 KINGS xix. 4–8. S. JOHN vi. 48–51.

WE will begin to-day by looking at our picture. It tells us at once something of its story.

There is a man sleeping on the ground, and an Angel is bending over him and seems just going to touch him. By the side of the man are a cake of bread and bottle of water. The country round looks very bare and desolate, like what we should expect a wilderness to be.

This man who looks so wearied and worn out is Elijah the Prophet.

We do not know anything about Elijah's birthplace, nor who his parents were; but we do know that he was one of the greatest of all the prophets whom GOD sent to His people. In some things he was like S. John Baptist, who came long after. He lived in desert places, and wore a rough garment of hair, and ate only the simplest kind of food. I cannot tell you all his story to-day; but if you care to know more about him you can, after you have finished reading this, get your Bibles and find out more for yourselves. His history is all in the Books of the Kings.

The one great work that Elijah did for GOD was to bring the Children of Israel back to the true worship of GOD, after they had been many years worshipping idols. He gathered them on the top of Mount Carmel, and there offered a sacrifice. Almighty GOD sent fire down from Heaven to consume the sacrifice, to show that He was pleased, and that He was the true GOD. When the people saw this they said that they would no more worship idols and false gods, but would serve Almighty GOD only. There were many false prophets and evil men who acted as priests of the false god Baal, and taught the people to worship him. All these Elijah put to death, that they might deceive the people no more. So he did the work GOD gave him to do.

But there was one very wicked woman in the land—Jezebel, the wife of the king. She worshipped a false god, and she was very angry at what Elijah had done, and especially that he had killed the false prophets. When she heard of his doings she sent him a message to say she would kill him within twenty-four hours.

When Elijah heard that, he was afraid. He had not been afraid to stand openly before the king and all the wicked prophets and priests, but this was different. A secret enemy might spring upon him and murder him, or some one might put poison in his food. He could not feel safe for a moment, and so he ran away.

We remember another prophet, Jonah, who ran

away and hid himself. But he did it before he went to his work; Elijah only went away when his work was done.

Elijah went away into the wilderness all alone. He journeyed all day, and with weariness and fear he was quite worn out. It seemed to him as if he could bear no more—as if he was all alone in the world; and so he prayed to GOD that he might die; that GOD would take him into the world where there was no more struggle and fighting against sin, but where he might have peace.

Almighty GOD loved Elijah, and He pitied him in his trouble. He knew that poor Elijah was tired out, and so He sent him the best possible comfort —He sent him sleep. Elijah slept and rested. How glad he must have been to forget all the scenes he had passed through—the shouting people, the dying priests cursing him as they died, the fear of death, the weary journey over the sand! When he woke up he would be much better able to face his future life. Often now sleep is the best thing GOD can give His people. Perhaps that is one reason why people sleep for sorrow; GOD lets it be so because it is the best comfort for them.

But then GOD wished to strengthen His prophet; so He sent an Angel to him. The Angel came and brought him food. Not rich food and dainty things, but just enough to keep life in him—bread and water. We don't need all kinds of rich things that we may be able to do GOD's Will.

Putting the food by him, the Angel touched him

gently, and, waking him, told him to rise and eat. How strange it must have seemed to Elijah to wake and find food by him in the wilderness! But he was still too tired and sleepy to notice it much. He ate a little, and then went off fast asleep again. Did you ever see a child too tired to eat? I remember once walking all day long with a boy, and when we came to supper he was so sleepy that he fell asleep again and again with the food between his lips, till at last he gave up trying to eat, and I carried him up and put him to bed.

So Elijah took a little food and fell asleep again. But this would not do. Almighty GOD had a long journey for Elijah to take, and he must be strong for it. So the Angel touched him a second time and told him of the journey, and that he must eat more. This time Elijah was wide awake, and sat up and ate and drank. He felt wonderfully better after that. GOD'S food had strengthened him, and he got up and started on his journey.

For forty days he travelled, until he came to Mount Horeb, where GOD had told him to go, and there he waited until GOD told him what he was next to do. During all that time he ate nothing more. It was forty days before he ate anything after the wonderful bread the Angel brought him in the wilderness, the bread GOD sent him. He must have felt then that GOD did love him, and would take care of him. He need not be afraid of Jezebel, or of anything she could do.

This is a beautiful story. I think we must all

like to think of this brave Elijah standing up alone for GOD, and then GOD'S pity when the brave man lost heart and ran away. The Angel must have pitied him too. How tenderly he seems to bend over and touch him in our picture! I wonder if we should have been as brave as he was? But there is this wonderful comfort for those who cannot help feeling afraid—GOD has not forgotten them. He does not despise them. He sends His Angels still to watch over them, that they may recover themselves as Elijah did, and go back again to do GOD'S work and live for Him.

Now, if I were to ask you what is the chief thing this beautiful story makes you think of, you would every one say at once, "JESUS CHRIST fasting in the wilderness, and the Angels ministering to Him." Quite right; in this Elijah is a type of CHRIST.

But there is a difference; do you notice it? Elijah was ministered to by an Angel and had food from Heaven *before* his fast, to strengthen him for it; but it was only *after* His fast that the Angels ministered to JESUS CHRIST. Elijah could not know this, but we may be glad to know that our Saviour King has suffered everything that any one of His people has suffered, either before or since He came into the world. To remember this will make us love JESUS CHRIST more than ever, and make us glad to think that we have such a King to follow.

But we are not to think only of our Lord and of Elijah; we must come to ourselves. We are keeping Lent, and we want help, and if we try to keep Lent very well we shall feel that we want a great deal of help. We may be very sure we shall get it.

Do you remember what the Apostle says about the Angels? "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation?" We are the "heirs of salvation," all baptized children, for this is the same that is meant in the Catechism by "inheritors of the Kingdom of GOD." The Angels watch over us. They minister to us. They bring us good thoughts. They spread their wings over us, and many a time when we might stumble and fall they hold us up. Did you ever read that another prophet called Elisha was surrounded by enemies, and his servant feared his master would be killed? Elisha prayed, and GOD let the young man see that all round Elisha there were chariots and horses of fire. The chariots of fire—that is, the blessed Angels—are round all GOD'S children. A little boy was once running across the street, when a pair of horses and a carriage were galloping down. There was no driver; the horses had run away. In another minute they would have knocked the little boy down and run over him; but just as they reached him they stopped quite suddenly, long enough to let him get out of the way, and then went on again. The little boy said to the people who came running to him, "Oh, didn't you see that beautiful man in white

who stopped the horses?" GOD had let him see an Angel.

Remember, then, the Angels. They are very near us, cheering us up, and helping us to fight against temptations, and saving us from things that would hurt us.

There is another thing yet we must learn about. What does this food from Heaven that GOD gave Elijah remind us of? What is that food that GOD gives His children in the Church, to strengthen and refresh their souls that they may live and serve GOD, not the forty days of Lent only, but forty years or more, all their life long? He gives this food, not by Angels, but by the priests of His Church. Indeed, the work of priests is very much like that of the Angels. They stand before GOD at His altar to minister to Him, and they go in His Name to minister to His people. Both these things the Angels do. The food they give is the BLESSED SACRAMENT OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST, THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

This is indeed Bread from Heaven. JESUS CHRIST Himself calls it so: "My Father giveth you the true Bread from Heaven."

When we come to church at the time of the Holy Communion, what do we see? There is first the Bread and Wine placed upon a small table called the credence table. At the proper time in the service this is brought to the priest, and he places it on the altar. Then he prays, and when

he prays and offers it to GOD a wonderful thing happens—the Bread and Wine are not common bread and wine now; they become consecrated, that is, made holy—they become the very Body and Blood of JESUS CHRIST. This is GOD'S doing. JESUS CHRIST is in Heaven, His Body and Blood are there. The Holy Spirit comes down from Heaven and joins the Bread and Wine to the Body and Blood of Christ in Heaven—unites them, or makes them one with that, so that they become indeed a heavenly thing, not Bread and Wine of this world only, but Food from Heaven. GOD Who worked by His Angel to feed Elijah, works by His priests in the Church. To *feed us*, I say, because He does not call us only to look on while this wonderful thing is done; we are to come and receive, as it was said to Elijah, "Arise and eat."

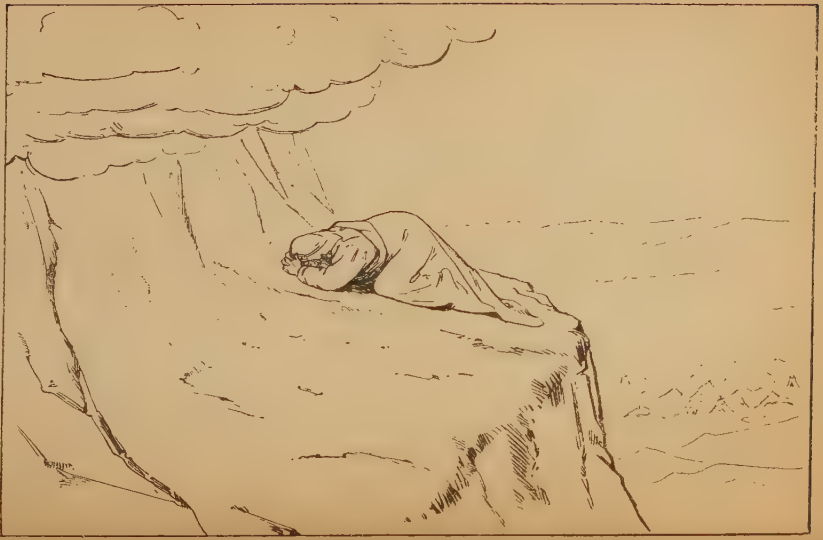
This is beautiful to think of. GOD gives Heavenly Food now to His people. When they are fasting and praying, when they are very tired or very full of sorrow, when they feel as if temptation was very hard to bear, they can go to His church and ask for food, and come away refreshed and strong. Children should remember this.

The Church says that all must be confirmed before they come to receive the Holy Communion. Now, you should all look forward to your Confirmation. This might be for some a good thing to think of in Lent. "Cannot I be prepared and Confirmed now, so that I might receive my Communion at Easter?"

And for those who have been Confirmed there might be this lesson—to come to Holy Communion more often. When our bodies are fasting, we should ask for spiritual food for our souls. When you are tempted and afraid lest you should fall into sin, come and get strength. When you are very sorry for sin, or for anything else that troubles you, come and ask GOD for comfort. There is nothing that we want for our souls that we cannot get if we come to GOD and ask Him to give it to us, when He gives JESUS CHRIST Himself to be our Food.

If every one thought of this more, their lives might be much happier. They would not feel so much alone. They would not be so tempted, as some people often are, to wish they were dead, or had never been born. They would feel that GOD was near them; that JESUS CHRIST was their King, and had come to set up His Kingdom in their hearts. They might often hear His voice speaking to them. To hear His voice is to have comfort beyond everything else in this world—a comfort and peace that no trouble in the world can take away.

"My GOD, and is Thy table spread,
And doth Thy cup with love o'erflow?
Thither be all Thy children led,
And let them all Thy sweetness know."



MOSES PLEADING FOR ISRAEL.

The Fourth Sunday in Lent.

MOSES INTERCEDING FOR ISRAEL: AND OUR LORD'S AGONY IN GETHSEMANE.

DEUT. ix. 17–29. EXOD. xxxii. 31, 32. S. LUKE xxii. 39–46.

OUR lesson last week left us thinking about the Holy Eucharist, in which CHRIST JESUS feeds His children with His own Body and Blood. We will think to-day about the night on which He first gave this Food to His disciples.

It was the night before He died, the very last of His life here on earth. He died on good Friday, so this was the night of Thursday in Holy Week—Maundy Thursday, as we call it. The word "Maundy" means "commandment," and the day is called by this name because on it JESUS gave His great commandment about the Holy Communion.

On that night He gathered His twelve disciples in an upper room in Jerusalem. He was just establishing His Kingdom, and they were to be the founders of it in His Name. This commandment was to be the life and strength of the Kingdom. Our Saviour JESUS first had supper with His disciples, and then, when supper was ended, He took Bread and Wine and blessed it, and made this new Feast. He gave the Bread and

Wine to them, and told His disciples that by that blessing they had become His Body and Blood. His great commandment then was that they should go on blessing Bread and Wine in His Name, and give the power to others after them, that this great Feast might continue in the Church until the end of the world.

Maundy Thursday, therefore, is a great day. You must try and remember it when it comes, and thank JESUS your King for the Food He has given to the children of His Kingdom. It would be a good thing if all His children could receive the Holy Communion on that day.

But this was not the only thing our Lord did on that night. We will follow His steps a little further.

When the Feast was over, He stood up with His disciples and sang. The words He sang were most likely from the Psalms of David, Psalms cxv.–cxviii. Would not you have liked to hear JESUS sing? No one ever could have sung as He did. And He loved the Psalms; when He was dying His last words came from them—He was saying them to Himself.

After they had sung, they all went out towards a little village called Bethany, where JESUS was very fond of going. He had some dear friends there.

This night they did not go quite to the village, but turned aside into a garden that lay just at the

foot of the hill. The garden was full of olive trees, and it was called Gethsemane. When they came into the garden, JESUS told eight of His Apostles to sit down and wait for Him just inside the gate; three others, Peter, James, and John, He took further in, under the shade of the olive trees. There were twelve Apostles altogether, but one was not with the others on this night. JESUS then went a little away from these three, telling them to keep awake and watch and pray. He was going to pray, and He wanted them to pray too. It would have been such a comfort to Him to know that they were awake and praying with Him—that they felt for Him in His sorrow, and wished to share it with Him. Then He fell on His knees and bowed down on His face and prayed.

Our Lord JESUS CHRIST often prayed—indeed, His life was a life of prayer. He got up early, a great while before day, and He stayed up late at night, when all others were at rest, that He might pray. But this prayer to-night was very different from any other of His prayers that we read of. He prayed as One in great sorrow; He said Himself, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful." He prayed as One Who saw some great trouble or pain coming upon Him, and wished that it might not come; He was afraid of it. He knew He was going to suffer and die; He came into the world for this; it was not simply suffering and death that He feared. It is a good thing to think of these sufferings of JESUS CHRIST; they help us to remember that when He

took our nature He became a Man like ourselves, and suffered as we do. So we are sure that He cares for us when we suffer, and will help us.

Three times our dear Lord kneeled down to pray. How long He prayed we are not told; perhaps for two or three hours. Three times He went back to His three disciples, to see if they were watching, and every time He found them fast asleep. Twice He roused them, asking them to watch with Him; the third time it was too late, and He said they could sleep on and take their rest. Was it not strange that they did not keep awake? Don't you think that afterwards they must have been very sorry, and wished they had tried to share in the sorrow of JESUS CHRIST? We might all be a little more thoughtful of others, and not leave them to bear their troubles alone. If we will try and be more kind in this way for JESUS CHRIST'S sake, we may be sure He would be pleased.

What a prayer it was that JESUS prayed! He spoke of the trouble that was coming as a "cup" of which He had to drink, and He prayed that, if it were possible, the cup might be taken away from Him. But He always added, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." If the Father wished Him to drink it, He would, no matter how bitter it might be. Here is a model for our prayers, and here is a lesson of obedience too. How often we may be told by a parent to do something hard, something we don't like! JESUS would do it, saying, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

In His third prayer, we are told, He prayed as One Who is in agony, and then a wonderful thing happened—great drops of blood fell from His forehead to the ground. Sometimes when people are in great fear or trouble, a cold sweat breaks out all over them; but think of a sweat of blood!

Now, what was the coming trouble that made JESUS CHRIST pray and suffer like this? It was SIN. Not that He had ever done any wrong. Oh no! JESUS had no sin of His own. When we have done wrong we sometimes feel very sorry, and weep and pray for forgiveness; but this was not so with JESUS our King. He had no sin; He was pure and holy. What sin was it, then?

He, the Son of GOD, took our nature that He might bear our sins. *Our sins* gave Him the great sorrow. It is very easy to say, "JESUS died for us," but think what this meant to Him. You would find it hard to count up all the wrong things you ever said or did, all your wrong thoughts, they are so many. How many, then, there must be in the life of a man of seventy! But what must the whole number and the whole wickedness be of all the men in all the world, not only of men and women alive now, but all that ever lived since the world began? GOD knows all these, and GOD made the human mind of JESUS know them all. Sometimes when a child sees or hears something very wicked, it makes him feel dreadful. Suppose you could see all the wickedness of the world, how would you feel? JESUS saw and felt it all.

But worse than that, GOD made the human soul of JESUS feel all these sins as *if they were His own.* Think of that! I know a girl who sometimes goes into the houses of the poor and sick, and it makes her so miserable she can hardly bear to do it; she feels as if it were in some way her fault. JESUS saw all the sin and suffering, and all the consequences of all the sin, and felt as if it was all His fault. "The LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Was it any wonder that He was in an agony? Was it any wonder that He prayed that the cup might be taken away, if to drink it meant bearing such suffering as this? But it was the Father's Will, and He bore it all for our sakes, that we might know His love, that we might feel His sympathy, that we might believe that GOD does really wish to save us. He shrank from it, for He was pure and could not bear to be thought guilty. Do you know how hard it is to be accused of something you have never done? But still He bore it that He might set us free.

It is a good thing to have a tender heart, and I think that the girl I spoke of just now, who feels others' sorrows so, must have a heart very like the Heart of JESUS CHRIST. But what tender hearts we ought to have when we think of JESUS CHRIST! "Behold, and see if there is any sorrow like unto My sorrow."

If you, my children, had tender hearts for the sufferings of JESUS, and if you remembered that

those sufferings were endured because of all your sins, as well as other people's sins, could you ever willingly do what you knew to be wrong? I don't think you could.

JESUS, dear JESUS, our Saviour, our King, make the hearts of us Thy children very tender and full of love to Thee. Make us to hate the sins that gave Thee such pain and sorrow. We are sorry for them. Help us not to sin any more!

Now, perhaps some might think that this story of our Lord's agony is so beautiful and so touching that it would not be possible to find anything in the Old Testament like it. We cannot find a story exactly like it, for JESUS is GOD; but we must remember that JESUS as Man suffers all that men suffer, so that we are sure to find, in the lives of some of His people, things like everything that happened to Him, only in Him they were much worse than in any single man. He suffered in the same way as others, but with a pain equal to all the rest put together.

Our picture shows us a man kneeling on the ground, alone, and, it seems, in great sorrow, yet at prayer. This is not our Lord, for he is not in a garden. There are no olive trees; he is on a bare mountain-side. In the valley below I see some tents. See, what clouds come down from the mountain-top and almost cover the man over whose head they hang! It is Mount Sinai, and the man is Moses.

We have had three lessons about him already, but his life is full of beautiful stories, and so many of them teach us about JESUS CHRIST.

Moses brought the Children of Israel out of Egypt, and led them, as GOD told him, to Mount Sinai. GOD came down upon this mountain to give His Law to the people. After He had given the Law, in a voice like the sound of a great trumpet, so that all the people were afraid, He called Moses to come to Him on the mountain, that He might show him wonderful and heavenly things, and teach him how to judge and lead the people. Forty days and forty nights Moses was there with GOD.

Now, the Children of Israel did not know much about GOD; they had been so long in Egypt, where the people worshipped idols, that they were not much better. When Moses was gone, and was so long away that they thought he would never come back, they turned away from GOD, and persuaded Aaron, the brother of Moses, to make them an idol. He made a golden calf, and they worshipped it and offered sacrifices to it.

Think what Moses must have felt when he came down from the mount and saw this. How terrible for him! His own people, his brother and sister among them—the people he had brought out of Egypt, whom he had taught in GOD's Name, to have forgotten GOD so soon and turned to worship idols! It was almost more than he could bear. And then, he knew besides that GOD could not

overlook this—that the people must be punished, and he must see them punished, suffer, and die. Oh, how we can pity Moses when we think of this dreadful grief to him!

What could he do? It was not his fault—he had been with GOD—yet he felt as if all the weight of the sin was on himself. He went back to the mountain, and there he cast himself down before GOD, praying—oh, so earnestly!—that GOD would forgive them; praying that, if it were possible, he might bear the punishment of their sins instead of them. "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin— ; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book." I wonder if the people had any idea that Moses felt their sins in this way? Perhaps, if they had known or thought of it, they would have held back from this sin, and from some other of their sins too, and so grieved him less.

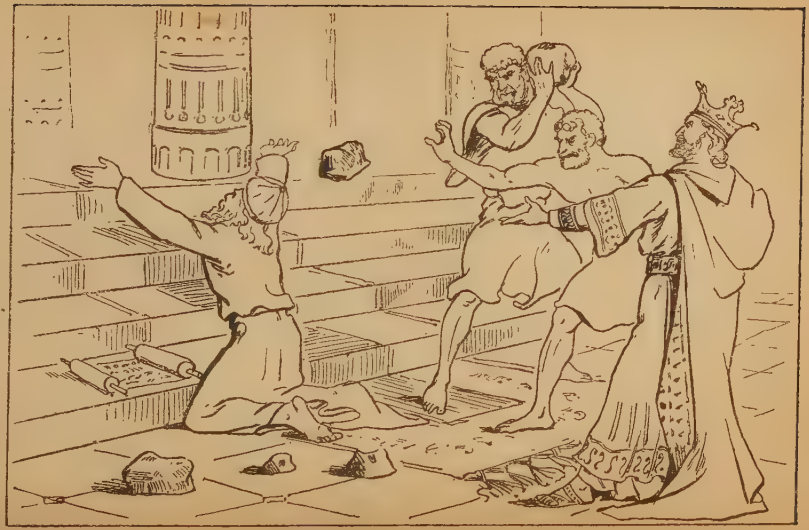
The thought of other people's sorrow does sometimes hold people back from sin, or help them to repent of it. I have known at different times two girls, each of whom had a mother and a home. They went away from home and went into strange countries, and moved from city to city, and one of them at least did many things that were very, very wrong. But they both repented, and worked and saved up money, and went home and confessed their sins, and begged to be taken back and forgiven. And it was the same thing that took them both home. "I could not forget my mother's

tears; wherever I was I thought of her and of the pain I had given her. At last I could bear it no longer; I must go home and tell her, and so I came."

It may help any child to do right if he or she will think, "If I do this I shall grieve my mother, my friend, my clergyman." And if this helps us, how much more it might help us if we shrank from sin because of the grief of JESUS CHRIST, our Lord and King! I saw a letter once which a girl had written to her clergyman; she said, "It eases me to talk to our Lord. I want to feel that I only sin against Him, as David said in the fifty-first Psalm, 'Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned.' Then it will be easier not to sin. I feel so deeply everything I do against your will or you, and when I feel and stop for our Lord's sake, it will be better still."

She was quite right.

May JESUS our KING keep all His children mindful of His love and His sorrow, that so for love of Him they may keep from sin.



THE DEATH OF ZECHARIAH.

Passion Sunday.

THE DEATH OF ZECHARIAH: AND JESUS CHRIST BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST.

2 CHRON. xxiv. 17–22.

WE will think to-day of a man who laid down his life for GOD.

GOD'S people, the Children of Israel, so often sinned against Him that it sometimes seems as if all their history was only one long story of sin. GOD brought them into the beautiful land He promised them, drove out their enemies, gave them all they could wish for. Yet they were ungrateful; they forgot Him, they went after other gods, and so sinned against Him. Ingratitude is a dreadful sin, and leads to so many others!

Some of the kings of Israel were good, but many of them were very wicked, and when the kingdom was divided into Israel and Judah it was just the same. Sometimes the people of Judah served GOD under a good king, but more often they and their king together sinned against GOD.

About nine hundred years before JESUS CHRIST came, there was a king called Joash, who was in the first part of his reign very good. He had had a strange history. When Ahaziah his father died,

his grandmother Athaliah, who was a very wicked woman, wanted to have the kingdom for herself. So she killed all the family of the king, including her own grandsons, except Joash. She would have killed him, but the wife of Jehoiada, a good priest, hid him away and kept him in the Temple so that the old queen could not find him.

He was hidden for six years. When he was nearly seven years old, the priest Jehoiada gathered the people together and a great many soldiers and brought Joash out, and told the people his story. The people were glad he had not been killed, and willingly took him for their king. Jehoiada crowned him king, and the wicked grandmother Athaliah was put to death.

Jehoiada took great pains to teach the young king what was right, that he might grow up good, and GOD helped him to be successful in this. Joash was a very good king. He worshipped GOD faithfully; he restored the worship of GOD; he repaired and made beautiful the Temple at Jerusalem, which the wicked kings before him had let nearly go to ruin; and for a time everything prospered, and the people were delighted that they had so good a king.

But Jehoiada the priest died. GOD let him live one hundred and thirty years, that he might help Joash as much as possible. He was buried with the kings in honour, because he had done so much for the kingdom and for the worship of GOD. With his death there came a change.

There were some of the princes and rulers of the land who did not care for the worship of GOD—who did not want the trouble of coming up to Jerusalem to sacrifice. They came to the king, and, by gentle words and words of praise, they got round him, as we say, and he gave them leave to worship idols, and to set up altars in other places, on mountains or in groves. This was a terrible sin, and a great dishonour to Almighty GOD, although the worship of GOD was still continued in the Temple at Jerusalem. So the people were divided, and some came to the Temple, and others forgot GOD and worshipped the idols in other places. We are not told that the king himself went after the idols, but he let others do it, and, as he was king and ought to have made them do right, this was as bad as if he had worshipped them himself.

The good priest Jehoiada had left a son called Zechariah, who was a good priest like his father. He was very grieved when he saw this, and at last could bear it no longer. One day when there were many people gathered at the Temple—perhaps it was some fasting-day, or other great occasion—he stood upon a high place over them all (most likely on the Temple steps), and there he denounced their sins. He warned them that there was only one true GOD, and only one true Temple, and that it was a most evil thing to go after others; that GOD would not pardon this, but would send punishment upon the land because of their sin. "Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD that ye cannot

prosper? Because ye have forsaken the LORD, He hath also forsaken you."

The people were very angry when they heard this, and gathered together in little groups and talked about it, and plotted what they might do to him. The king heard it too—perhaps he was there when Zechariah spoke—and he was more furious than any one. He knew that it was his fault; that he ought to have remembered what he was taught when he was young; that he ought never to have given the princes leave to set up the idols; and he hated Zechariah because his words made him feel how guilty he had been. He was so angry that he commanded the people to stone Zechariah to death. The people were glad to do it, and in a few minutes it was all over; Zechariah had given up his life for GOD.

The picture shows us how he died. He was in the very court of the Temple. We see him wearing his priestly dress, kneeling on the steps on which he had been standing a few minutes before; the roll from which he has been reading to the people lies before him. His arms are reaching upward to GOD. GOD will receive his soul. GOD will punish those who killed him.

What an awful thing this was for the king to do! Jehoiada had saved his life, Jehoiada had taught him all the good he knew—had helped him in every good work; but now, because he is angry when he is told of his sins, he murders Jehoiada's son in the very court where the father had crowned

him king. He forgot all the kindness Jehoiada had shown to him—he thought of nothing but his own anger; he had no gratitude left in him, and his name will be remembered, together with his ingratitude and cruelty, as long as the world lasts.

GOD could not pass over this wickedness. Before the year was out the Syrians came against the land, and the servants of the king himself murdered him in his bed. It would take too long to tell of all the suffering and misery that came upon the people in consequence of this sin. As Zechariah foretold, they forsook GOD, and this was the beginning of GOD'S forsaking them.

The cruel death of Zechariah at the hands of those who ought to have been grateful to him, at once puts us in mind of the sufferings of our Lord JESUS CHRIST. This is one of the chief thoughts of Passion Sunday. We will go on with the story of His Passion from where we left off last Sunday.

You remember that, after His last supper with His disciples, JESUS CHRIST went into the Garden of Gethsemane, and kneeled down and prayed. He prayed in a great agony, because He felt upon Him the sins of the whole world.

While He was kneeling at prayer there came a great company of people to the place. There were priests, and scribes, and councillors, and soldiers, and servants besides, with lanterns and sticks and swords. They came to take Him prisoner. Why did they do this?

JESUS CHRIST came into the world to do men good. But if He was to do this He must tell them of their sins. They did not like this, especially when they were men of importance who thought well of themselves, and were well thought of by others. The chief priests and scribes were the most bitter in hating JESUS. They were the religious teachers; but He showed them that they were not living true to the religion they taught—that they were really hypocrites. They did not like to be found out, and so they hated Him. People always do hate those who find them out in wrong-doing.

There was another reason why they hated JESUS CHRIST. He said He was the Son of GOD. They would not believe it, although the life He lived and the works He did were quite enough to convince them that what He said was true. How strange this was! Instead of being thankful to GOD for sending His Son into the world, they only rebelled more against Him, and began to plan how they might put His Son to death. They forgot the many good things GOD had done for them—that He had brought them out of Egypt, and given them a good land, and when they had lost that land by sin and gone into captivity, He had brought them back to it again; how He had promised them many other blessings if they would be true to Him;—they forgot all these things, they would not believe in His Son, and for that Son's very goodness they wished to kill Him.

Another thing makes this part of our Lord's

Passion more sad to us. One of His own disciples, one who had been chosen to be an Apostle, who had preached and worked miracles in the Name of JESUS CHRIST, joined with these wicked priests. He was very covetous. He had expected that because he followed JESUS, and JESUS was a King, he would get riches and a good position, and he was disappointed. He knew that the chief priests and scribes wanted to find some way to take JESUS prisoner and lead Him away and put Him to death privately, and he went to them and offered to help them. He told them he could take them at night to a place where JESUS would be all alone. They were glad to hear this, and promised to give him thirty pieces of silver.

Does not that seem almost the worst thing we have heard? To think that one of His own disciples should sell JESUS to His enemies! But there is nothing a covetous man will not do to get money. Don't be too anxious to have money, children; you don't know what this might lead you to do. Judas Iscariot was the name of the man who did this. He was that one of the Apostles who was not with JESUS when He prayed in Gethsemane.

Judas and the priests and scribes made their plan very carefully, and at night when JESUS was praying they came. Judas led the way, and when they got near he went forward and gave JESUS CHRIST a kiss. That was a dreadful thing to do. A kiss means that you love a person and want to be kind to him, but Judas came as an enemy. He

had told the soldiers he would give them a sign that they might know for certain which was JESUS, but we may wonder why he chose a kiss for a sign. Perhaps he did not want JESUS to know that he had brought the soldiers; or perhaps he wanted to hide this from the other disciples; so that if he were accused of it afterwards, he might say that he only came as a friend, and had nothing to do with the soldiers who were there at the same time—"Did not you see me kiss Him?"

But JESUS knew it all, and said, "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" This was all He said, and then He let the Jews bind His hands and lead Him away. He was so gentle and so ready to do the Father's Will, that He would not ask for Angels to help Him, nor let any man do it. And more than that, when Peter took a sword and struck a man who was there and cut off his ear, JESUS asked the soldiers to loose His hands enough for Him to touch the man's ear and heal it—"Suffer ye thus far," and the man's ear was healed.

The soldiers and servants led JESUS CHRIST to the palace of the high priest, and there they tried Him, to see if they could find anything that He had done wrong that they might have an excuse to kill Him. But there was nothing. False witnesses came—men who were ready to swear to anything if they were paid for it, but even these could prove nothing against Him. There was no true charge against JESUS but one—He said He was the Son of GOD. The high priest asked if this was true, and

JESUS answered that it was, and some day they should see Him coming on the clouds of Heaven. For this, and this only, they condemned Him to die. Zechariah died because he was the servant of GOD; JESUS CHRIST was condemned because He was the Son of the LIVING GOD.

Think what JESUS CHRIST suffered in all this. He knew that He was their Saviour and their King. He knew the love of GOD for them. He saw how ungrateful they were. Yes, the sufferings of JESUS were not the pains He bore in His Body, so much as the pain of heart and soul that He felt at the wickedness and ingratitude of those He wanted to save.

But, children, if these Jews were wicked, what shall we say about ourselves? We know a great deal more than they did, and we have their example as a warning to us. We know how many have believed in JESUS and have followed Him as their King, and how happy this has made them, and we know what He would do for us if we would let Him. How ungrateful and wicked, then, it is of us to sin against Him! Can we find any excuse for doing so many things that grieve Him? I am afraid not. Think of this in Passion-tide. If we sin against JESUS we are worse than the Jews. Oh, how sorry we ought to be for all our anger and bad temper, all our disobedience and story-telling, all our unkindness and crossness to other children and at home! Ah! if we thought of the SON of GOD, JESUS our King, we should not do these things.

Could you not try, at least in Passion-tide, to remember how JESUS suffered for you? This would help you more than anything else to keep from sin and to please Him. Let me tell you of a girl who loved to do this.

She was a servant in a large hospital where there were a great many servants. She always seemed to me rather different from most of the others—more gentle, more tender-hearted about sin. It seemed as if there was something in her life that made her more earnest, more like JESUS CHRIST. One day I found out what this was.

There was a long corridor in the hospital, leading to the chapel. It was part of her work to wash the floor of this every morning, and she had to do it kneeling on her knees. Along the wall of the corridor were many beautiful pictures of the sufferings of JESUS. Some of you will know what I mean when I say that they were the Stations of the Cross. This girl loved to look at them. As she came before each picture, she knelt a moment and looked up at it; then, thinking about it, she went on with her work. So from one picture to another all down the corridor she carried the sufferings of JESUS in her heart. When her work was done—and it took an hour—she said a little prayer and went away, but all the day seemed happier, and all the day she had something to help her against sin, for she had spent an hour meditating on the sufferings of JESUS CHRIST.

You cannot all do that, but you could, if you

would, give a few minutes to think of Him. Don't be ungrateful. He gave His life for you.

"Oh, how could I forget Him,
Who ne'er forgetteth me?
Or tell the love that let Him
Come down to set me free?"

CAIN AND ABEL.

Palm Sunday.

ABEL KILLED BY HIS BROTHER CAIN: JESUS CHRIST BEFORE THE ROMAN GOVERNOR.

GEN. iv. 1–10. ST. LUKE xxiii. 13–25.

WE were thinking last Sunday about the delivering of our Lord JESUS CHRIST up to death. His enemies took Him away from Gethsemane, where He had been praying for them, and led Him to the high priest's house. He ought to have found there goodness and truth and justice, but instead of that He was mocked and reviled and condemned to be worthy of death.

The Jews did all this because they hated JESUS CHRIST. They hated Him because He told them of their sins, and warned them again and again that GOD would forsake them if they continued in their wickedness.

But there was another reason, too, why they hated Him. It was because He was Himself so good. He told them that He was the Son of GOD, and His life was so pure that they felt that what He said was true. He was different from themselves. They were full of all kinds of evil, sinning against GOD and against one another, but He was sinless. For this they hated Him, and so it was

that for envy they delivered Him up to die; they were envious because He was better than they.

There is an Old Testament story which tells us what a dreadful thing envy is. We will think of that now, and come back to our Lord's sufferings afterwards.

Adam was the first man whom GOD made like ourselves. He was made in the image of GOD, and GOD gave him a living soul.

The first two children of Adam and his wife Eve were boys, Cain and Abel. GOD gave them to Adam, and so they were as Adam was, sons of GOD.

Now, the younger of the two, Abel, remembered this, and he tried to be good—he tried to love and serve GOD, and to obey Him in all things. It does sometimes happen that the younger children of a family are better than the older ones, though we generally expect the older to know more, and to set a good example to brothers and sisters.

Cain was not like Abel. He did not care for GOD. He wished to please himself.

Almighty GOD gave to Adam and his sons one very important command. He told them that whenever they came to Him to pray, they must always offer a sacrifice. And He told them what the sacrifice was to be. Man had fallen into sin, and for his sin he deserves to die, and he would be in danger of death whenever he came near to GOD. But GOD did not wish man to die, so He told

them to bring a lamb with them, and offer a sacrifice for sin, and He would accept the death of the lamb in their stead.

Abel obeyed GOD. It is true that he was very good, but still he knew that because of his parents' sin he was born in sin, and therefore he had no right to stand before GOD. He took a lamb out of his flock, and built an altar of stones. Then he killed the lamb, and laid it on the altar, and GOD accepted the sacrifice and was pleased with him. We are not told how GOD showed that He accepted it, but I think most likely He sent fire down from Heaven to consume it.

Cain did not do as Abel did. He said to himself something like this, "I don't see why I need offer a lamb. I am not a great sinner; I do all that is right. I am willing to offer to GOD something, because I know that all comes from GOD, and I don't want to seem ungrateful; I will give Him something from my field or my garden, but I don't see why a lamb need die for me." So he made an offering of these things, perhaps corn and grapes.

But GOD would not accept this. There was no fire to consume it; no voice came from GOD to Cain to tell him that GOD was pleased.

Then Cain was very angry. Not angry with himself, though he knew that this was his own fault. He was angry with his brother. He said GOD had favoured him unjustly, though he knew that the reason was that his brother had obeyed

GOD, so he hated him and envied him. And Cain went on hating a long time. Very likely he offered sacrifices a great many times, but his were never accepted, and Abel's always were. Wherever Abel went Cain looked after him, his face, as we say, very black; he scowled after him as he passed by.

GOD came to Cain and spoke to him, and tried to persuade him to do right; He asked him why he looked so black and sullen. If he would only do right, he would be accepted too. The sin-offering, the lamb, was close at hand, why did he not take that and offer it?

But no, Cain would not listen. He would not acknowledge that he was a sinner; he would not repent of his sin. He went on hating Abel more and more.

At last the end came. One day the two brothers met in the fields alone. Perhaps Abel was coming back from a sacrifice, and was looking bright and happy; perhaps he sang to himself. And Cain hated him more for this, and he began to talk with him, and, I suppose, to try to quarrel with him. Then his anger became fiercer than he could control, and he sprang on Abel, his brother, and struck him down and killed him. Oh, how dreadful! Think of envy leading to murder, a brother's murder too!

How terrified Cain must have been! Look at him in our picture. He stands with staring eyes looking on his dead brother. He could scarcely have understood what had happened. Remember, he

had never seen a dead man before. Would Abel never open his eyes again? would he never speak or smile again? would he never sing again as he stood by his sacrifice? would he never again sit under the trees with Adam and Eve, his father and mother? No, never any more. He was quite dead. When Cain understood this, and knew what he had done, he fled to hide himself. He dared not return to his father; away, away he must go, a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, no home, no peace, the sight of his dead brother always before his eyes. What a fearful sin and terrible punishment!

Now think again of JESUS CHRIST and the Jews. JESUS our Lord was the Son of GOD, and He lived on earth a life without sin. The Jews hated Him because He was so good; they could find no fault in Him.

They hated Him all the more because His goodness made their own lives look so bad. This is often so. We might think of some child who had been painting a picture, or doing some piece of work, and doing it very badly, taking no pains. The painting or the work seems pretty good so long as no one but the child sees it, and so long as he sees no other picture. But if he puts that picture by the side of one that is really beautifully painted, then he sees how poor his own picture is, and perhaps he gets angry and tears it up, and perhaps envies the other person who paints so much better. So it was that the life

of JESUS CHRIST made the lives of the others round Him seem so bad. And this made it worse —their lives might have been pure and good, and they knew they were bad by their own fault.

And there was another thing, too, that made them angry. JESUS told them of their sins. And He told them they would never be any better because they would not own their sins. They were blind to their own faults: they did not seem to know how bad they were: and how could they hope to be better? They wanted GOD to come and deliver them from their enemies, but they did not want to believe that the worst enemy they had was the sin in their own hearts, and that, more than anything else, they needed a Saviour who should offer a sacrifice, and save them from that sin. So they envied JESUS CHRIST, and hated Him worse and worse.

Pilate, the Roman governor, understood this. He was a just man, and knew that by the Roman law there was no reason why JESUS should be put to death. He knew that JESUS was innocent of any crime, and that it was only because of envy that the Jews brought Him there that He might be crucified.

Is there not something here that makes the wickedness of the Jews seem greater? They could not kill JESUS themselves—at least, they were afraid to do so, though afterwards they killed Stephen—so they took Him to Pilate, who was a Gentile, a Roman, not one of the Jews at all. "He came

unto His own, and His own received Him not." His own kinsfolk, the nation to which He belonged, took Him and gave Him over to the governor of another nation whom they hated, that they might crucify Him. Why, that seems worse than Cain killing his own brother. It is as bad as if Cain had found some one else, who was his own enemy, and, making friends with him, had asked him to go and kill his brother for him.

Pilate did not want to kill JESUS CHRIST, but he was afraid of the Jews. He wanted to please the Jews and make friends with them. He had done some very evil things to the Jews, and he thought if he did this for them they would forget all about the other things. He had an evil conscience, and he was afraid that if he made the Jews angry they would complain to Cæsar, the Roman emperor, and he would lose his place and power. So when he found that he could not persuade the Jews, he was afraid to refuse what they asked, and therefore gave JESUS up and commanded that He should be crucified.

Good Friday comes this week, and we shall think of the sufferings and Death of JESUS CHRIST. It will make us more thoughtful, and more careful to keep Good Friday well, if we remember to-day, and every day before it comes, that on that day the envious Jews, who would not acknowledge their sins, gave JESUS up to the Roman governor to be condemned to die.

But we are not only to think of JESUS and the Jews; we must think a little of ourselves. We do not want to be like them, do we?

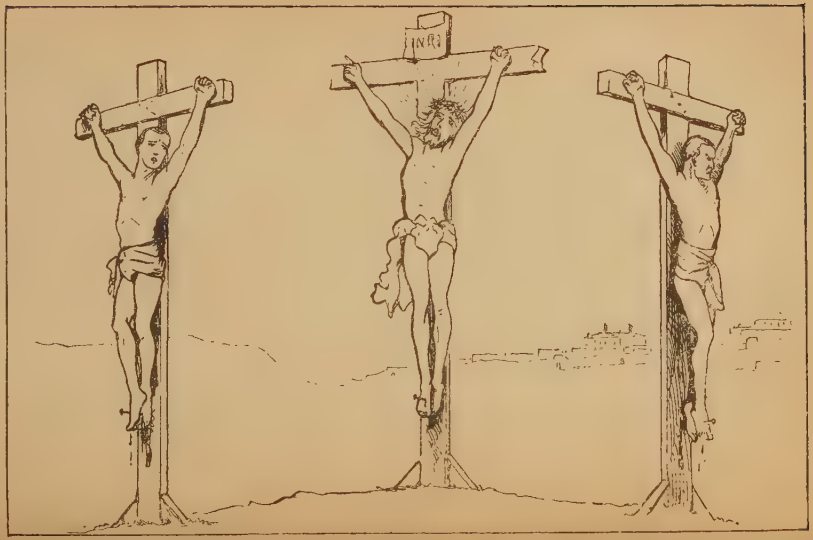
If we do not want to be like them, we must try to be good, must we not? Yes. But there is something else before that. No one can be really good until he is sorry that he has been bad, and is ready to acknowledge the things he has done wrong. So many people forget this, and make such mistakes in their lives. They begin by trying to be good before they are sorry for having done wrong; they don't go far enough back in their lives. They only say, "I can be different if I will." They forget that to do better will not take away the sins they have committed. It is hard to own our sins, but don't let us be afraid or ashamed to do so. If we spill ink in a book, we can turn over a leaf and go on reading, but that does not take the blot out. If we only turn over a new leaf in our lives and say we are not very bad, we may some day look into them again and find sins there which we had never been sorry for, and so they had never been taken away. Let us be sorry, that we may be forgiven.

The only thing to make us really and truly sorry is to think of the sufferings of JESUS CHRIST. If you can, go to church every day this week, and pray and think of what He did for you on each one of the days. If you cannot get to church, kneel down in your own room and think of JESUS and His pains, and say, "Good JESUS, help me to be sorry for my sins, and forgive me."

To think that I can be good if I like, and that I don't need to repent, is to be like Cain, who would not own himself a sinner.

To be sorry for my sins, and to take them all to JESUS, Who suffered for me, and to ask Him to take them all away by the power of His Sacrifice, is to be like Abel, who brought his lamb and prayed to be forgiven. JESUS CHRIST is the Lamb of GOD, and we come to Him and offer Him and His Sacrifice to the Father for the forgiveness of our sins.

"O LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKEST AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD, HAVE MERCY UPON US."



THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS CHRIST.

Good Friday.

JESUS CHRIST IS CRUCIFIED.

S. Luke xxiii. 26–46.

During the four months that have passed since the First Sunday in Advent, we have tried to follow our Lord Jesus Christ step by step in His earthly life; to-day we see where His earthly life was leading Him.

You might think of some one trying to follow the footsteps of one who had passed the same way before him, and wondering where the footsteps would lead him to. The track might turn about, now in one direction, and now in another; first in a pleasant, smooth road, and then in one all briars and thorns. As he followed on he would see that, with all its windings, the path of the one he was following was leading to some particular place. At length he might see a hill rising up before him, and then he would say, "Ah! now I see. He was going towards that hill; there I shall find him." And our Lord's life, whether at Bethlehem, Nazareth, or Jerusalem, was leading Him towards a hill, and as we follow Him we shall come to the hill too. It is the Hill of Calvary.

He was going to that hill, and it was not a place of brightness, but of pain and sorrow. We come here to-day to think about it.

Some of us have been trying to keep Holy Week; every morning and night we have been looking forward to to-day, GOOD FRIDAY. But think of our Lord JESUS CHRIST looking forward to it, not for four or five days only, but for many years. Think of Him every day, year after year, saying to Himself, when He lay down to rest at night, "I am one day nearer to the end—one day nearer to that hill on which I must suffer and die." We have looked forward to Good Friday, and perhaps have tried to prepare ourselves to spend it well; JESUS looked forward and prepared Himself all His life.

This is one reason why He was called a Man of Sorrows. The road that leads up to the Hill of Calvary is called the Way of Sorrows, or the Sorrowful Way; the whole life of JESUS CHRIST was one long way of sorrow, and it ended on Good Friday at the Hill of Calvary.[1]

If we were asked, "What is the most dreadful thing in the world?" we should say, "SIN." Indeed, there is nothing more dreadful. It is impossible for us really to know how dreadful a thing sin really is. Think what sin does. *It destroys the soul.*

[1] When this is read to children, it would be well for them to sing hymns at intervals, or some portion of the "Story of the Cross." Parts i. and ii. of the Story, or the hymn "Oh, come and mourn," would be suitable at this point.

Did you ever see a dead body? Perhaps it was the body of some one you knew very well. It had been full of life and strength, but now the life has gone, it is quite still. The eyes that used to shine so brightly are closed; the lips that used to smile so sweetly move no more; the voice you loved to hear sing is quite silent. You stoop to kiss the forehead as you used to do before, and you find it, oh, so cold! It makes you feel a little bit afraid. There is nothing really to be afraid of, but sometimes we cannot help it. I have read of a little girl who was shut up in a room with a dead body, and she was so frightened she gave one long scream and then died. That was foolish of her, for there is nothing to fear in a dead body. But still, there is something very solemn about death; we do feel, we ought to feel, a certain awe when we stand beside one who has died.

But what is this compared to a *dead soul?* Think of a soul from which all the life of GOD has gone. The love of GOD can no longer warm it. It looks up to GOD no more. It never cares now to sing GOD'S praises; indeed, it cannot sing them. It is cold and hard and still. This is what sin does to the soul—it kills it.

And this is not GOD'S doing; it is the soul's own fault.

Some time ago I was sent for to go to a hospital to see one who was dying. I found a poor girl very near to her end. But what do you think she was dying of? I will tell you. She had had a

great disappointment in her life, and had become very much discouraged, and at last thought it was not worth while to live any longer. She had tried to take away her own life, and now she lay there dying by her own act. I think I never saw so sad a sight. She was very sorry. Oh, how she wished she had not done it! She could not speak, but she wrote upon a slate her sorrow, and prayed so earnestly that GOD would forgive her. There was no help for her. She had the best doctors in the city, but no one could save her life, and that night she died. She had destroyed herself.

I shall never forget that sad sight. Yet it is far worse to think of a dead soul. If we could only see such a soul, we should never forget it. The soul of a child of GOD that by its own sin has destroyed the life of GOD in itself, has become cold and dead, dead, quite dead, in sin, and this all by its own fault! How sad to think of!

Yet there are people whose souls are dead, and who go about and talk and laugh, and try to seem happy—try to forget their sin.

Do you think you could be happy if you knew you were carrying a dead soul about with you? I have read of a man who had committed some great crime, and as a punishment they chained him to a dead body; wherever he went he had to carry that dead body with him. That was dreadful, was it not? Yes; but if we only knew how far more dreadful it is to carry about a dead soul because we have fallen into wilful sins! This is one of the

most terrible things about sin—it kills the soul. If we remembered that, we should be afraid to commit the smallest sin.

To-day we have something besides this to think of and to help us to understand the dreadfulness of sin.

Look at your picture. What a sad picture it is! We do not need to be told what it means. JESUS CHRIST is dying upon the Cross. Yes, the Son of GOD Who came into the world, and was born a little Babe on Christmas Day, and Who never did any wrong, is hanging, suffering, bleeding, dying on the Cross. And this is the consequence of sin.

Perhaps JESUS CHRIST would have come into the world whether man sinned or not, but if there had been no sin, He would not have had a life full of suffering, and then this dreadful death.

When we look at a picture of JESUS on the Cross, we must think of sin. He died because of sin. We may perhaps be glad, because we know that by His death He put away sin and gives us the power to do so too; yet we can never forget "sin is so great and dreadful a thing, that it caused the death of the Son of GOD on a Cross on the Hill of Calvary."

We have been thinking about dead souls. It was for the sake of these dead souls that JESUS died. He died that they might live. He died to offer a sacrifice for them, to wash them from their sin in His own blood, and to give back to them

the life that by their sin they had lost. Ah, how dreadful sin is! It kills the soul. But how good GOD is, to make a way by which souls can be brought to life again!

If we think of these two things, sin and GOD'S love, we shall surely try to put all sin away for His sake.

I knew a little girl who had a great temptation in her life. There was a wrong thing she was often tempted to do. One Holy Week it came to her every day and every hour. It seemed as if she must fall into sin. But she said to herself over and over again, "JESUS CHRIST died on the Cross for me," and on Good Friday morning she was able to thank GOD that the temptation had gone quite away. "By Thy Cross and Passion, good Lord, deliver me."[1]

Now let us look again at our picture. JESUS CHRIST is not hanging on the Cross alone. There are two other crosses with men on them, one on His right, the other on His left. Bad men these are, robbers, and perhaps murderers, and they are put there to die with Jesus. If any stranger passed by, he must have thought JESUS was a bad man, to see Him hanging there between these two. Perhaps this made JESUS CHRIST more sad; certainly it made His Death more full of shame.

These men had been very bad all their lives, and they were bad when they came to die. It is

[1] "Story of the Cross," part iii.

generally so. Most men die as they have lived. I remember once a man who had done many wicked things, and forgotten GOD all his life. His priest had often talked to him, but he would not listen. This man got sick, and was like to die. The priest came again and again, and asked him if he would not repent. No, he did not want to think of such things then. The priest held before him a picture of CHRIST on the Cross; but he only said, "Take it away; I don't want to see it." So he died as he had lived; his soul was already dead, and now his body died too.

The two thieves were something like this man. Their hearts were very hard, and when they saw JESUS suffering, they did not pity Him; they only mocked Him. They knew something about Him; perhaps they heard the priests speak of Him as the Son of GOD, and so they said, "If Thou be the Son of GOD, save Thyself and us."

But they were not both alike, the one on the left seems to have been worse than the other. And yet he had not always been bad. He was once a little child like you, a baby in his mother's arms; he did no wrong then. When did he begin to sin? Perhaps when he was a boy, growing up with other boys. Perhaps he began with little things, or what seemed little. He disobeyed his mother, told lies, took little things that were not his, stayed away from the synagogue, or the sacrifice in the Temple. However he began, he went from bad to worse, and now he hangs dying for

his sins on a cross. And it is too late. His heart is hard; he cannot be sorry. He blasphemes GOD, and dies a sinner.

Dear children, never think that any sin is a small thing; we hope never to be like this man, but any boy or girl who begins with small sins might go on as he did, and at last be as bad, or even worse.

The other thief, the man on our Lord's right, must have had some good left in him. Perhaps, after he began to sin, there were times, when he felt sorry and tried to do better. So his heart had not got quite hard. At first he mocked JESUS CHRIST; but when he saw how patiently and quietly JESUS hung there, making no reply to those who reviled Him, he began to pity Him, and then to think Who He was. He began to feel that JESUS must be different from other men—that He must be indeed the Son of GOD.

When he believed this he felt there might be some hope for him. Then he turned his head toward the other man, and told him to be silent. "Do you not fear GOD?" he said. And then he acknowledged his sin, and that GOD was punishing him justly. This was a hard thing for a man who had been bad to say, but it was the very best thing possible; it helped him to pray to JESUS CHRIST for forgiveness and help. "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." This was his prayer, and JESUS CHRIST heard it. He looked at the poor man, and knew all about

him. Perhaps He knew that the man had had a bad home and no good teaching when he was young; He knew that he had wanted to be good, but temptation had been too strong for him; He knew, too, that now the man did truly repent of his sins, and so He forgave him. "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." This was the beautiful promise of JESUS CHRIST to him.

What a wonderful difference there was in the death of these two thieves! One hung on the cross a dead soul, waiting only for the pain he suffered to wear him out, and then his body would be dead too. The other was there with a bleeding, dying body, but with his soul full of hope and joy and gratitude. The one had given himself to sin, and cared nothing for JESUS CHRIST. The other, though he had sinned so much, turned his face to JESUS, confessed his sin, and found mercy and pardon.

Learn to-day how terrible it is to sin, and then how good GOD is to children who sin and are really sorry.

Do not go away from church and forget what day this is. All day long keep in your minds, "This is Good Friday; JESUS died to save my soul from sin." It will keep you quiet; it will make you good.

You may learn this lesson so well to-day that it may be with you in all your life; that you may never think little of sin; and that, whenever sin comes

near you, you may turn your face to JESUS, and find that sin has no real power over you—that you are GOD'S children, and He has given you life to live for Him, and has set you free.

"BY THY CROSS AND PASSION, GOOD LORD, DELIVER ME."[1]

[1] "Story of the Cross," parts iv. and v.

Good Friday Afternoon.

JESUS CHRIST DIES, AND IS BURIED.

S. John xix. 28–42.

It is three o'clock on Good Friday afternoon, the hour which in the Bible is called the ninth hour. Jesus Christ has spoken for the last time, and has bowed His head and given His spirit into His Father's hands. He gave Himself up to die; He died of His own Will. When three o'clock came, He cried with a loud voice, for He was full of power, and then His Soul went to Paradise, and His Body hung quiet, still, dead, on the Cross.

Think of Him hanging there. Jesus, the Son of God, is dead. His Mother, His disciples, the Roman soldiers, the Jews all stand round, looking at Him. They have never seen any one die like this; they do not understand this death. Some love Him: some only wonder: some feel sorry and ashamed. They feel they did a wicked thing when they asked to have Him put to death, but it is too late to undo it. They can only smite their breasts to show their sorrow, and go quietly home.

It had been very dark from twelve until three, but now the darkness has gone and the afternoon

sun shines out brightly. How strange it must have seemed to those who loved JESUS. Sometimes when friends die, people feel as if the sun ought not to shine, nor the world to go on as usual. What must those have felt who stood by the Cross, and saw the bright sun lighting up the dead Body of JESUS CHRIST?

Yet the brightness that came after His death teaches us something. All is not dark at the Cross of JESUS. By His Death He broke the power of Satan over the souls of men. He offered a sacrifice for sin. He made it possible for souls dead in sin to live again. So He brought light and life into the world. "He died that we might live," and it was well that as He died the darkness should pass away, and the glorious sun shine out once more. Think, then, of the quiet dead Body of JESUS hanging on the Cross, bathed in light, and think of the love of GOD Who sent Him that He might die there for us.

"Glory be to JESUS,
Who in bitter pains
Poured for me the life-blood
From His sacred veins."

Now we will learn about the things that happened after JESUS CHRIST was dead.

The next day was the sabbath day, for the Jews kept Saturday as the sabbath. They did not know anything about the first day of the week and Sunday; they kept the seventh day.

They were very careful in observing the sabbath day, and this particular sabbath was a great day,

on which there were some special things to be done, because it was the Passover time.

Now, they did not want the dead bodies of JESUS and the two thieves to hang on the cross on the sabbath. They did not like to think of those two men—for the thieves were not dead—hanging all that day in suffering, and they did not want to have to stay to watch the Cross of JESUS CHRIST. So they asked Pilate that the legs of those who had been crucified might be broken, so that they might die more quickly and be taken down from their crosses and be buried.

The governor gave them leave, and sent his soldiers to do what they asked. The soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves; but when they came to JESUS, they found that He was already dead, and so they left Him alone. Yet one soldier, who perhaps wished to be quite sure, lifted up his spear and thrust it into the side of JESUS.

Now, here is a wonderful thing, showing us how GOD takes care even of the bodies of those He loves. He had said beforehand that not one bone of the Body of JESUS should be broken, and so JESUS died before the soldiers came. And He had said in another place, that men shall see Him Whom they pierced; so when the soldier lifted his spear, though he may have done it only in cruelty, he was yet carrying out the Will of GOD. GOD'S Word never fails. Even when they don't think of it, men have to do what He wills for them.

Think for a moment of the two thieves. They saw JESUS die, and then they saw the soldiers coming with clubs to break their legs. I suppose the wicked thief only cursed the more, and wished he could get off the cross that he might punish those who were hurting him. But the other one, how he longed to die! He was going to Paradise. JESUS was gone before, and in a little time he would be there and see the King again. He would not mind the suffering, not even the pain of the broken legs; he would rather be glad of it, because it would take him sooner to JESUS CHRIST. Does not this help us to understand how some people want to die, while others are afraid and cry out with pain? If they don't know and love JESUS, they may well be afraid; but why should children be afraid to die if they love JESUS, and are only going out of this world to be with Him, the CHILDREN'S KING?

One other thing we must speak of, because John has written it for us in his Gospel, and it is very wonderful.

When the soldier pierced the side of JESUS with his spear, there came out Blood and Water. You see at once what this tells us of. Water, that must mean Baptism; and Blood, why that must mean the Blood of CHRIST that we receive in the Blessed Sacrament. Yes, the two Sacraments came from the side of JESUS CHRIST, the Sacraments by which He gave life to His Church. Nothing that hap-

pened to JESUS in His Life or in His Death happened by chance, or happened without some meaning. All He did and suffered was for us. All tells us something of the love of GOD.

How we ought to value the Sacraments of the Church. Pray that you may be helped to think much of them. And pray to-day for those who do not know what the Death of JESUS really means; who do not know, who have never received, the Sacraments GOD has for them—Baptism, Absolution, the Holy Eucharist, by which the Blood and Water from the side of CHRIST might cleanse their souls from sin.

We will think now of the burial of JESUS. Surely that must have been a wonderful sight. Would not you have liked to be there? Oh, if all of us, for whom He had done so much, could have helped to take Him down from the Cross and bury Him, and so to show our love!

I remember reading of a great fire in London, when a brave fireman went into a burning building and saved the lives of many women and children. He saved them, but he lost his own life. Before he could get out, a wall fell and crushed him, and it was a week before his body was found. And what a funeral he had! All those whom he had saved were there, not only those saved from that last fire, but many that he had saved before, and all their grateful friends with him. Every mark on his poor burned body was a scar of honour. As

the great procession went along, it was hard to tell whether most were weeping at his loss, or praising the great deeds he had done in his life.

What, then, ought the burial of JESUS to have been? But there were only a few there, yet how they loved Him!

Who were those who took Him down from the Cross? Nicodemus, a ruler who had been afraid to confess before men that he loved JESUS CHRIST, and Joseph, a rich man who gave Him a grave. But besides these we must think of His Blessed Mother. As she received His dead Body in her arms, did she think of the time when she had nursed Him as a little baby, and her heart had been full of gladness? Oh, to see the death and dead Body of her dear Son was like a sword piercing through her soul!

How tenderly Mary Magdalene would kiss the wounds of JESUS. From those wounds had come the power to save her from her sin. He loved her in life, but she did not know how much until she saw Him die. And other tender-hearted women were there with her.

Surely John, too, who had leaned his head on the breast of JESUS at the Last Supper, would bear the wounded Head of JESUS on his breast as they carried Him to His burial.

It was a beautiful garden in which JESUS was buried, and it was early spring-time. Were the flowers just coming into bloom around, and, as

their sweet smell filled the air, did they bring any comfort to the mourners? Did those who buried JESUS think that, as the seed is laid under the ground and then springs up bright and beautiful, so JESUS first and then all His people after Him would rise again from the dead, more fair and beautiful than they had ever been in this life? We think of these things when we bury our friends now, but they did not know as much as we; yet that fair garden may have brought them some comfort.

The garden in which JESUS was buried may make us think of something else that is very beautiful. His Body was laid in the grave there, but His Soul was gone to Paradise. Paradise is the garden of the Lord. All is beautiful there. We do not know what fair flowers may bloom in that sweet place, but we know there is no sorrow, no pain; JESUS left all that behind Him here. To this Paradise the souls of those we love go. It was once, perhaps, a place of darkness and doubt; those who were there did not know how long they would be kept in it, nor what was before them. But since JESUS has been there all is changed. They rest there in peace. They are in the light of GOD'S Presence, and they become purer every day. All that belonged to this world is taken away. All the stains of sin are purified; all the wounds in their souls are healed. The Tree of Life is there; they rest under its shadow and are healed.

Think of the joy among the souls waiting in Paradise when JESUS came among them. Think, too, of the joy of the poor thief when at last he died and found JESUS waiting to receive him. His joy is the joy of all GOD'S children now. Think, dear children, what happiness Good Friday brings us. It tells us that when we die we shall go to GOD'S Paradise, and JESUS has prepared it for His children, and we shall see Him there.

I remember a little girl dying. She lay very still in her pain, in her father's arms. Her mother knelt beside her. "Mary," said her mother, "do you want to die?" "Yes, mother, if JESUS wishes it." "But, Mary, do you want to leave us?" "No, mother, I don't want to leave you, for I do love you; but if I die I shall see JESUS, and I want to see Him, I do love Him so." She went that day to be with Him she loved.

Think of her and of all those whom you have known, and who have loved JESUS CHRIST. They are with Him in Paradise, and we can ask, "Grant them, Lord, eternal rest, and let light perpetual shine upon them."

"Thou Who, hanging on the Tree,
To the thief saidst, "Thou shalt be
To-day in Paradise with Me:"
Hear us, holy JESUS.

"That, when earthly toil is o'er,
We, in rest for evermore,
May behold Thee and adore:
Hear us, holy JESUS."

Easter Day.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

S. Luke xxiv. 1–8.

A long time ago, a missionary was preaching far, far away in Africa. A great crowd had come together to hear the wonderful words that this strange white man was saying, and the chief of a powerful tribe was there with them. They sat in a circle on the ground, their eyes fixed on the preacher, all eagerly taking in what he said.

The missionary told them of Almighty God—that He had made the world; and the chief said, "Good, good." Then the missionary told them of the creation of man—that God had made him very good, and had given him all good things; and the chief said, "Good; God is very good." Next he spoke of Adam and Eve and the beautiful garden in which they were put, and how they disobeyed God, and sinned against Him; and the chief said, "Bad, bad."

Then the missionary told how God looked down from Heaven and saw the world lying in sin and misery, and sent His Son into the world that He might redeem it and make it good again. At this the chief said, "Good; God is very good." Then

the preacher told of the death of JESUS CHRIST upon the Cross. Oh, how still they all were as they listened! "Sad, sad," said the chief.

Next he told how JESUS had risen again and gone into the glory of Heaven, and was preparing a place for all His people there, that all, even those to whom he was preaching, might come to Him there. "Good, good, oh, very good!" cried the chief; and, jumping to his feet, he added, "Let us go, let us go there!" But the missionary said that all must first die and go down into the grave, and then all rise again and stand on the earth—all, bad and good, must rise; and then GOD'S people go to Heaven. "What!" said the chief, "all rise, all come back to this world—all the men I fight against, all the men I kill?" "Yes," said the preacher, "they will all come back." "I don't believe it," cried the chief. "Go away; I don't want to hear that." And so he and his people would hear no more. They did not want to hear about the resurrection; they were afraid.

Why do we keep Easter Day? Because our Lord JESUS CHRIST rose from the dead on this day, the third day from Good Friday.

> "JESUS CHRIST is risen to-day,
> Our triumphant holy day. Alleluia!"

We remember with gladness that JESUS our Lord and King will never suffer any more; that He endured all and died, but that death could not hold

Him. He came back from the grave, and now His life has no sorrow; it is joy for evermore.

"Now above the sky He's King,
Where the angels ever sing, Alleluia!"

But there is another reason why we can be glad to-day.

JESUS is not the only One who rises from the dead. We too shall rise again. Some day, perhaps soon, our King will come back to this world, and then all who have died will come with Him, and we shall be there too, and for a little time stand here on the earth again.

Now, do we want to be like that chief, afraid of the resurrection? No; we want to be looking forward to it with joy. This is the chief reason why we keep Easter. JESUS has risen, and we shall rise too. We are looking forward and longing for the day when pain and sorrow and death can hurt us no more; when we shall rise again and see JESUS our King.

I suppose that chief was afraid because he was wicked, and had been very fierce and cruel, and had killed many men, and he was afraid to meet them face to face again. I wonder if there are any children who read this who are afraid to think who and what they will meet again when they rise from the dead?

We have been trying in Lent to be loving and kind and gentle to all around us. Is there any one whom we did not want to meet on Easter Day

because we had not been good to them? Well, we shall meet all at the resurrection. We may keep away from people now, but we cannot help meeting them then.

We have, perhaps, tried to overcome some sin during Lent, tried harder than we ever did before. Then we can be very good on Easter Day. But if we have not tried, and the sin is still with us, and it is in our hearts when we die, we shall find it in ourselves when we rise again, and as it may spoil our happiness on Easter Day, so it will spoil our joy when we rise to see JESUS CHRIST.

If we have been untrue, if we have pretended to be good when really we were bad, and were thinking bad things in our hearts, and so deceiving those who live with us,—when we rise from the dead we shall see these people again, and they will know then what we are really like. Perhaps if we think of that we may be a little afraid, because no one would like every one else to know them exactly as they are. Thinking of the resurrection may help us to be very true in all our life, that we may really be what we seem to be.

But how shall we be able to do this? There is one thing which will help us more than all. It is to remember that we are already risen with CHRIST.

After JESUS CHRIST rose from the dead, He went up into Heaven. From Heaven He sent the Holy Spirit to make us His members and to give us His

life. As He has risen, we are made members of CHRIST *risen*, not of CHRIST as He was before He died. So we have the risen life of CHRIST in us. "CHRIST is risen from the dead, and become the First-fruits of them that slept; for as in Adam all die, even so in CHRIST shall all be made alive."

This is done for us when we are baptized—we are buried with CHRIST, and rise with Him. In warm countries and places where people can be dipped under the water, instead of having the water only poured over them, this is more easily understood. To go under the water is like being buried, and to come up again is like rising from the dead. So S. Paul says we are "buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also we are risen with Him."

Think how it would help us if we could only always remember it. "We are buried with Him by Baptism unto death, that like as CHRIST was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." We should, if we remembered this, never say, "I can't help doing wrong;" "I can't be good." We should never willingly give ourselves up to any kind of sin. We should feel as S. Paul did, "I have died to sin; sin must not have power over me any more. I must live to GOD now, and I can do it because I have been raised from the dead, and made a member of CHRIST."

Of course, we shall still have to fight against Satan and sin, but the fight will not make us

sad. Our heart, our affections, must be set on CHRIST, Who has risen for us, and then we shall be willing and able to struggle hard to overcome sin, and to live as those who belong to JESUS CHRIST.

So Easter is not only a day to be glad of the Resurrection of JESUS, but a day on which to think of all the joy and help that resurrection brings to us.

> "CHRIST is risen, we are risen:
> Shed upon us heavenly grace,
> Rain, and dew, and gleams of glory
> From the brightness of Thy Face."

If we think of this, and CHRIST'S Resurrection helps us in our life, we shall not be afraid of the great resurrection at the last day. There is nothing that can separate from JESUS, their Lord and King, those children who have remembered CHRIST'S Resurrection, and have tried to live the new life He has given them. "When CHRIST Who is our Life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

Now, we must not give up all the things we have been trying to do in Lent. Some of them we ought to do all the more carefully, because it is Eastertide.

You need not deny yourselves pleasures and some of the nice things you have put away in Lent; Easter has come, and it is right to take these things again.

But there are other things you have tried to do. You have thought of the sufferings and Death of JESUS CHRIST, and for His sake you have tried to overcome your faults—to put away sin. And this you must go on doing; never give this up. If the thought of the death of JESUS is to keep us from sin, much more should the thought of the glorious Kingdom which by His Resurrection He has opened to us, help us to persevere. "I am risen with CHRIST; I am a child of the resurrection; I must not sin any more. JESUS, help me to live in Thee."

So persevere in your life until JESUS comes again, to take His children to Himself.

And these things we may think of this Easter Day. If you go to church, you will very likely see a procession—perhaps you will be in it yourself—I hope so. Now, Easter Day is a beautiful day on which to have a procession in church.

Think of the processions of JESUS CHRIST. There is His procession on Palm Sunday, when all the people followed, crying, "Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord!" Then the procession of Good Friday morning, when He went out to Calvary to die, the women following Him weeping. These are sad to think of. Then think of JESUS going into Paradise. The Soul of JESUS went out of His Body on the Cross, and went where all the dead were waiting for Him. What a wonderful procession that was! JESUS goes before,

and all the blessed spirits gather round Him whithersoever He goes.

But the Easter procession, how much more wonderful that was! JESUS came back from the dead, the holy Angels all around Him, and the saints who rose with Him following. Think of that wonderful procession which no eye of man saw; only GOD and the holy Angels. For forty days JESUS went about on earth, showing Himself again and again to His people, the saints with Him, and they too sometimes seen by others.[1] When earthly kings go in procession they have a guard of soldiers with them; think of JESUS our King going about in the days of Eastertide with a body-guard of risen saints!

One more procession there was, grander than all. We cannot imagine the glory of the procession as JESUS went up into Heaven. He went as the King of Glory, the Angels shouting His praise, and the saints surrounding Him. What would we not have given to see that procession?

But now our procession to-day is to teach us this. We are risen with CHRIST, and He goes before us in all our life; we are following Him. Think of GOD'S children all over the world following JESUS. What a mighty procession! Day by day, hour by hour, step by step, they follow Him. Children, are you in this procession? Are you following JESUS among His saints on earth? In my home, from my home to church, in church to the altar, and then to my home again; from my home to my school or my

[1] S. Matt. xvii. 52, 53.

work, and then to my home or my church again—in all I am following JESUS CHRIST.

As you march round your church to-day, singing of the resurrection of JESUS, think of Him Whom you are following, and pray that you may so really follow Him in all your life now, that you may have a place in the last great procession when JESUS comes again, and may, with the holy Angels and all the saints, praise for ever JESUS CHRIST the Children's King.

"JESUS ! by Thy holy arm,
Keep thy little ones from harm,
Till our Easter songs we sing
In the city of our King :
Glory, Alleluia !"

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

Low Sunday.

JOSEPH RESTORED TO HIS BRETHREN: AND JESUS CHRIST AMONG HIS APOSTLES.

GEN. xlv. 1–15. S. LUKE xxiv. 36–48.

TO-DAY is Low Sunday—that is, Lower or Lesser Easter. We must keep Easter thoughts still in our minds.

Think again of the first Easter Day. It was very early in the morning when JESUS rose from the dead. No one saw Him rise unless it were the holy Angels. They were not far off when JESUS was risen; they took away the great stone that had covered the mouth of the grave.

But JESUS did not keep those who loved Him waiting long. Very soon after His Resurrection He showed Himself to Mary Magdalen, who loved Him so truly and waited by His grave, not understanding what the Resurrection could mean. Then He came to Simon Peter, whose heart was broken with grief because he had denied his Master; and then, in the evening, to ten of His Apostles together. It is of this appearance to the ten we will think to-day.

There were only ten there. One, Judas, was

gone. He had betrayed his Master, sold Him for money, and when he saw JESUS would die, he went and hanged himself; he could not bear to live longer. Another had gone away by himself, we do not know where; perhaps he was still weeping all alone. His name was Thomas, and we know he loved JESUS very dearly. So there were only ten when JESUS came on Easter night to see His Apostles again.

Think of their joy! At first they were afraid. They could hardly believe that it was Himself, but thought it must be a spirit. Perhaps they were afraid, too, because they had forsaken Him, and not stood by Him when He was brought before Pilate and led away to be crucified. What would He say to them? Well might they fear!

But JESUS was very loving. He did not reproach them. He stood in their midst, and then said, "Peace be unto you." And He showed them His hands and His side, that they might see the marks that the nails had left there, and know that it was Himself.

Then He told them of the blessings that should come to all the world now that He was risen from the dead. So they were very glad when they saw the Lord.

We must come back to-day to our Old Testament stories. We did not have these on Good Friday and Easter Day, because it seemed best on those days to think only of our Lord Himself.

To-day we have a story which is a beautiful type of the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST.

Look now at your picture; there is one man who stands before a number of others. He seems younger than almost all of them, and his dress is different. The others are gathered in front of him, and one is going forward as if to embrace him. It is Joseph before his brethren in the land of Egypt. Perhaps you will not see at once how Joseph can be a type of JESUS in His resurrection, for Joseph had not died. Let me tell you the story.

There were twelve brothers, the sons of Jacob, and Joseph was the youngest but one. Joseph was the one his father loved most, and Joseph was very good. His brothers were not all good; sometimes they did things that were very wrong. They hated their brother Joseph, because he was not like themselves. They hated him, too, because his father loved him so much, and they were jealous of him. And they hated him, also, because he told the truth, and when his father asked him about his brothers' doings, he told the evil things he had seen them do.

There was another reason for their hatred, which may seem a strange one. Joseph had two curious dreams, and they thought that these dreams meant that some day he would be their ruler, and they would all have to bow down to him. They hated him so much that they only looked for a chance to kill him, and they got the chance.

One day when he came to them alone in the

fields far from home, they took him and put him into a deep pit, that there he might starve to death; but afterwards they changed their minds, and took him out and sold him to some merchants, who might take him away and make a slave of him. How cruel and wicked!

The merchants carried him into Egypt, and sold him as a slave to the captain of the king's guard. For a time he got on very well, and all liked him, though it was hard for him to be a slave. But his master's wife was a wicked woman and lied about him, accusing him of things he had not done. His master was very angry, and put him in prison. Poor Joseph was in that prison for more than two years.

At the end of that time GOD brought him out. Pharaoh, the king, had two dreams which no one could explain. He heard that Joseph had explained the dreams of two men who had been in prison with him, so he sent for him to see if he could tell him what his dreams meant. And GOD helped Joseph to do it, and the king was so delighted that he made Joseph a great ruler, and put his own ring on his hand and made him next in power to himself over the whole kingdom. To be brought out of a dungeon in which he had lain so long with very little hope of deliverance, and to be made ruler over the land, was not that almost like life from the dead?

But there is more in the story yet. The dreams that Joseph explained to Pharaoh foretold that

there would be a great famine—that there would be no corn nor food for any one for five long years. And after five long years of plenty this came to pass. All over that part of the world people were ready to die of hunger except only in Egypt. There they had plenty and to spare, for in the five years before the famine came, Joseph had taught them to lay up great stores of everything against the hard time coming. When others heard this, they came from all parts to buy food in Egypt.

Now, among those who came were Joseph's brethren. They came to buy food, and they had to buy it of Joseph himself, though they did not know him. They had never heard what became of their brother, and they could never suppose that the poor boy they sold to be a slave could have become a great ruler in Egypt. They came a second time, and Joseph asked them a great many questions that made them feel very uncomfortable, he seemed to know so much; and he treated them in a way that seemed very hard. This he did on purpose, because he wanted to make them remember and feel how wrong they had been when they sold their brother to be a slave.

At last he made himself known to them. This is what our picture shows. They are all before him; all are astonished, some seem pleased, and some are very much afraid. One is running to meet him. That must be Benjamin, the youngest of all, the one that Joseph most loved. How glad

they were when they found that Joseph was not dead, and still more when they knew that he was ready to forgive all their wickedness!

They went back to their own land and told their father all, and brought him and their wives and little ones down to Egypt to Joseph, for he had promised to take care of them all so long as the famine should last.

What was it to old Jacob, who had thought his son dead for so many years, when he found him alive and well, and ruling over the land of Egypt? Certainly we can compare it to nothing else but a resurrection, life from the dead.

Now, can you not see for yourselves what a beautiful type all this is of the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST, and especially of what we have been thinking of this Low Sunday?

Joseph sold by his brethren tells us of JESUS betrayed by His disciple Judas into the hands of the Jews, but of more than that. The whole nation of the Jews were brothers of JESUS CHRIST, and they hated Him for His goodness, and because He told them of their evil deeds. They were all ready to do the very thing that Judas did, and were quite willing to give JESUS into the hands of strangers, that He might be bound as if He were a slave and put to a slave's death.

Then think of Joseph in prison, and in that prison doing GOD's Will, and trying to help and comfort those who were in prison with him. And

do you not remember that JESUS, when he died, went down and "preached to the spirits in prison"?[1] He went down to the place where all the dead were waiting, and there He gave them comfort and joy by the good news He came to bring them.

Joseph, with all his brethren round him, how well that tells us of JESUS on Easter night amid His disciples! All were astonished, some were afraid; but when they saw that it really was JESUS, and that He was not angry, and would not punish them, though they had all forsaken Him, how glad they were!

Then think of all the good things Joseph could give them; and JESUS, when He came back from the grave, gave wonderful gifts to His brethren—the Holy Ghost, the Sacraments of the Church, and power from on high. He told them of all the blessings that should come on the whole world through them now that He was risen from the dead and they were going to work for Him. Joseph fed his brethren, and JESUS fed all His brethren and children with the Bread of Life.

And Joseph was ruler over the land. None could do anything in Egypt without him. JESUS rules the whole world. The Father "hath committed all judgment unto the Son." How strange it was for his brethren, who had been so jealous of him, so fearful lest he should rule them, to have to come at last and bow down before Joseph! So will all who have hated JESUS CHRIST have to own Him their

[1] 1 S. Pet. iii. 19.

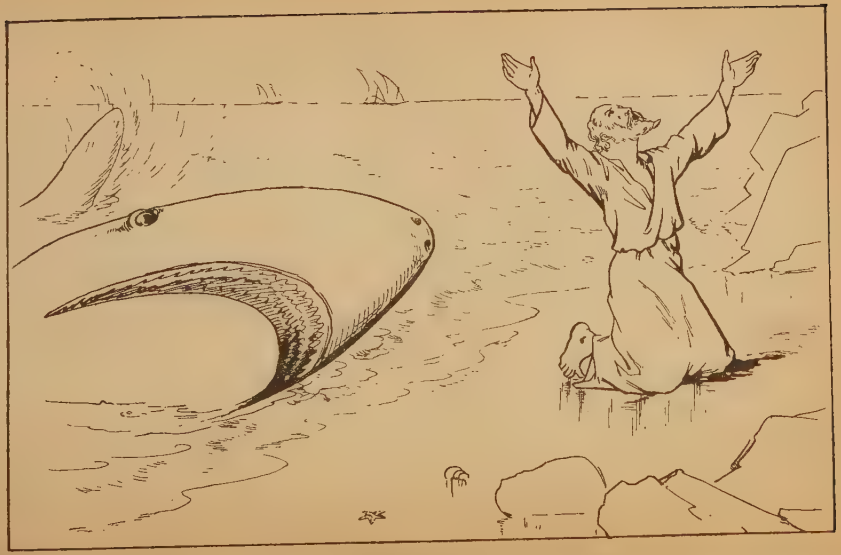
Lord. They may not want to do it, but they will not be able to help themselves. The Jews and the Gentiles, the Jewish high priest and the Roman governor, the faithful ones who stood by the Cross and the Scribes and Pharisees who mocked—all will some day see Him, and bow themselves before Him. JESUS shall be Lord over all.

Try and read all the history of Joseph carefully, and see if you cannot find out for yourselves some other ways in which he is a type of CHRIST; I think you can.

What a wonderful book the Bible is! Don't you think so? Only fancy finding stories, written two thousand years before JESUS was born, which tell us so much about Him. Some people have thought this so wonderful who yet did not want to believe the Bible to be true, that they have said they thought these stories and prophecies had been written after JESUS came into the world. But we know this was not so, for the Old Testament was the Bible of the Jews long before Christ was born. What we really learn from this is that the GOD Whom people worshipped in the days that the Old Testament tells us of, is the same GOD that JESUS came to reveal, that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, had all the same GOD that we have. If we know this, we can hope and believe that the good GOD Who took care of Joseph in prison, and Who raised up JESUS from the dead, will also take care of us His children, will watch over us in our life,

and will be with us when we die, and raise us up at the last to have our place in the Kingdom of JESUS CHRIST, the CHILDREN'S KING.

"The First-begotten of the dead,
For us He rose, our glorious Head,
Immortal life to bring.
What though the saints like Him shall die,
They share their Leader's victory,
And triumph with their King.
No more they tremble at the grave,
For JESUS will their spirits save,
And raise their slumbering dust.
Oh, risen Lord, in Thee we live,
To Thee our ransomed souls we give
To Thee our bodies trust!"



JONAH RESTORED.

The Second Sunday after Easter.

THE RESTORATION OF JONAH: AND JESUS CHRIST BY THE SEA OF GALILEE.

JONAH ii. S. JOHN xxi. 1–14.

WE are still keeping Easter, and so our lesson must be upon the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST.

When JESUS was preaching to the Jews before He suffered and died, they asked Him to give them a sign or token that He was the Son of GOD—something that should be a proof to them that He had a right and authority to speak as He did and to do the things they saw Him do.

He said He would give them one sign, and that was His Resurrection. He told them beforehand that when He died He would be three days and nights in the earth, and then come back again. By this they should know that He was the Son of GOD.

His Birth at Bethlehem was not enough, for many little children were born into the world there, and when He was born there was nothing by which ordinary people could know He was different from others. It would not have been enough if He had only died—many others who were innocent might die; nor could He by death only save us from

our sins. But if He rose again, that would be a sign indeed. Was it ever heard before that one came back from the dead by his own power? If He could do that, He must indeed be the Son of GOD.

We have already seen that CHRIST fulfilled His promise; let us think to-day of another of the occasions on which He showed Himself to the disciples after He was risen from the dead.

Seven of the disciples had gone fishing on the Sea of Galilee. They did not know what else to do. JESUS CHRIST had called them from being fishermen to be Apostles, but He had died, and though they knew He had risen again, He had not yet clearly told them what their work was to be. Anything was better than being idle, and so they went back to their fishing.

But GOD did not mean them to be mere fishermen any longer, so He would not let them catch anything. They toiled all the night, but not one fish came into their nets. It was early morning, scarcely light, and they were gathering up their nets to go home, when they saw some one standing on the shore. They could not see who it was, but He asked them if they had caught anything, and when they answered, "No," He told them to try once more, and cast their net on the right side of the ship. They did so, and now they could not draw it in, it was so full; there were one hundred and fifty and three great fishes in it. Then they

knew Him. Long, long before this JESUS CHRIST had done very much the same when He first called some of them to follow Him—He had given them a great draught of fishes. John, who loved Him so much, was the first to know Him now; but Peter who loved Him very much too, and who loved Him all the more because JESUS had forgiven his sin, was the first to get to Him. He plunged into the water and swam to shore, and fell down before His feet.

How glad they were to see JESUS again! He spoke especially to Peter this time. He told him He was to feed His sheep, to be a shepherd to His lambs. I think He did this before all the others that they might know that JESUS had forgiven Peter, and so might not think unkindly of him any more because of his denying his Master. They must all have understood by this miracle that all their power was to come from JESUS, and I think they now understood that He must have now explained to them what the work was He had for them to do—to go and preach the Gospel and make Christians in all the world. We never hear of their going fishing again.

So the sign JESUS gave was fulfilled. He rose, and by that Resurrection He gave them power.

Now, when JESUS said to the Jews that His Resurrection should be a sign to them, He did not say it in exactly those words. He went back to the Old Testament, and spoke to them of a man

whose history is written there, and in whose life there was really a type of the resurrection itself.

Look at your picture, and you will see a man kneeling down. He seems to be kneeling on the seashore, and his arms are stretched out toward Heaven. He seems to be chanting a Psalm, perhaps the words, "Out of the deep have I cried unto Thee, O Lord," or some such words as these. Close behind him, in the water, is a great fish; from its head I think it is a shark. The man is Jonah the prophet, and he is praising GOD because He has brought him back from the dead.

You will remember that in our lesson for Sexagesima Sunday we learnt that Jonah was a prophet whom GOD sent to Nineveh, a very wicked city, to preach to the people and tell them that for their wickedness their city would be overthrown.

Jonah did not want to go. He was afraid the people of Nineveh would stone him, or he was afraid that GOD would change His mind and forgive the people, and the city would be spared, and he would be counted a false prophet. So he ran away. He got into a ship just going to sea, and sailed away in another direction.

But he did not get very far, for a great storm came up, and the ship was almost sinking. It did not seem possible to save it, though the sailors tried their very best.

Now, in those days people had very simple faith; they did not talk about things happening by chance, and they did not know much about the laws by

which storms come and go, such as men have learnt a good deal about in our times; they believed that nothing came, not even a storm at sea, except by the Will of GOD. So they felt sure this dreadful storm had come because GOD was angry with them. They could not think why, for they did not know of any wrong they had done. They prayed, and they told Jonah to pray too.

When they had all prayed, and still the storm raged, they cast lots to see if they could find out for whose sin it had been sent. I suppose that means that they cut some cord into different lengths, and held them together to see who would draw the shortest; or perhaps they wrote all their names on slips of wood, and then the captain drew one out. The lot, when it was drawn, fell to Jonah.

When Jonah saw he could not escape, he told them the whole story, and said that they had better throw him into the sea. They did not want to do this, but when there seemed no help for them, they prayed and asked GOD'S forgiveness if they were doing wrong, and threw him in. They were quite right, and at once the storm ceased, and they offered a sacrifice and praised GOD.

Now, what became of Jonah? He was not drowned. No, for GOD had seen all this. It was He Who brought the storm, and He had guided the lot that it might point out Jonah. GOD took care of him.

Almighty GOD rules the fishes of the sea as well

as the men on earth and the winds and storms, and He brought a great fish to the very place just when Jonah was thrown into the sea, and the fish opened his mouth and swallowed Jonah alive.

I think this great fish must have been a shark. It is sometimes called a whale, but it could not have been that, for whales are never found in the Mediterranean Sea, where this happened, and the throat of a whale is so small it could not swallow a man. But there are sharks in that sea, and some sharks are twenty feet long, and can swallow a man easily. Sharks have been caught and killed, and, when opened, found to have the bodies of men inside them. Of course, GOD could have brought a whale there, and enlarged its throat to swallow Jonah; but I don't think He would do that when there was no need—the sharks in the sea would do quite well, and GOD brought one near the ship just when it was wanted to do His Will.

Now, it is very wonderful to think of Jonah being kept alive inside the fish for three days and nights. Men cannot live under water more than a few minutes, and yet Jonah was there all that time. And he knew where he was. What a dreadful thing it must have been to him! He said it was like being in hell; he calls it the "belly of hell."

While in this dreadful place, Jonah remembered GOD and repented of his sins, and cried to GOD for pardon and deliverance. Then GOD spoke to the fish, and he came near the land and opened his mouth, and threw Jonah out on the land, safe and

well, alive from the dead. How wonderful! No wonder Jonah fell down on his knees and praised GOD. He would never forget that terrible time.

Now, children, this is a true story. It reads almost as if it were a fairy tale; but it is in the Bible, and our Lord JESUS CHRIST tells us that it is quite true. Jonah really was cast into the sea, swallowed by a fish, and brought back to life on the third day.

This is the man that our Blessed Lord said was a type of Himself and His Resurrection. When the Jews asked a sign, He gave them this. He said that "as Jonah was three days and nights in the fish's belly, so He would be three days and nights in the heart of the earth." So Jonah is a type of the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST.

Don't you think, too, that the story of Jonah reminds us a little of what we spoke of on Easter Day—our Baptism?

Jonah went down under the water, and then was brought back, that he might live a new life for GOD. And this is why we are baptized.

But there is more done for us than there was for Jonah. He was, indeed, in a way changed, and came back a better man. He had learned GOD'S power, and that he could not escape from Him, and he was willing in the future to obey GOD; but his old nature and disposition was still in him—he was not really different.

It is not so in Baptism. We do not rise to exactly the old life that we had before. Baptism is called a new birth. We are in it born again, born to have the life of GOD. A new nature is given to us.

But then, if Jonah was better only because he had learnt GOD's power, how much better ought our resurrection to make us! If we are raised from the death of sin and have new life, how like to CHRIST we ought to be—not like our old selves, but like JESUS, our Lord and King, Who has risen from the dead!

Try and think a great deal of this during Eastertide. Perhaps you say, "Well, I know if I had gone through what Jonah did, it would have made me a much better child, I am sure of that;" or perhaps you say, "If I had only been alive to see JESUS after He rose from the dead, what a difference it would have made to me!" My dear children, GOD has done for you more than He did for Jonah, yes, and more than He did for the disciples, when they saw JESUS between His Resurrection and Ascension. He has raised you up, and made you a member of CHRIST. CHRIST, Who rose from the dead, is not standing before you to be looked at. He is in your heart that you may know and love Him, that in your heart you may love Him as your SAVIOUR and worship Him as your King. Never forget that.

Do not let us waste our time in wishing that we were like others—that we had the things GOD has given them; we cannot have these. Each must use

what GOD has given to himself. He has given each the very thing by which we can please Him. With what He gives, and His blessing, we can become far better than with anything we could choose for ourselves.

"I worship Thee, Lord JESUS,
My King and Saviour mild;
Thou hast blest other children,
Bless also me, Thy child."

ELIJAH AND THE WIDOW'S SON.

The Third Sunday after Easter.

ELIJAH RAISES THE WIDOW'S SON: AND OUR RESTORATION FROM SIN.

1. KINGS xvii. 17–24. S. JOHN xx. 19–23.

OUR picture to-day gives us another Old Testament story, another story to help us to learn something about the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST, and our resurrection with Him.

A long time ago there lived a prophet of GOD called Elijah, who did a great many wonderful things in GOD'S Name and for His people.

At the time he lived, GOD'S people, the Children of Israel, had become very wicked. In order to punish them, and to make them remember Him and repent of their sins, GOD sent a famine into their land. For three years there was no rain, and so there was no corn, no grass, no food for either men or beasts. This was their punishment.

Now, Elijah was all alone in the world. He had no home, no money, no food; he seemed likely to starve. But GOD was watching over him, and sent him where he would be taken care of.

He was told to go to Zarephath, to the house of a poor widow living alone with her son. He went as GOD told him, and there at the gate of the city he met a poor woman gathering sticks to make a

fire. When Elijah saw her, he knew she was the woman GOD meant, and he asked for a little water. As she was going to fetch the water, he asked her to bring him some bread with it. This she could not do, for she had none. She had only a little meal and a little oil, and she was just going in to make a cake of these for herself and her son, and then they expected to die, for it was the last morsel of food they had.

Then Elijah asked her to make him a little cake first, and he told her that he was sent to her by GOD, and that GOD had promised that the little meal and oil she had should not be used up, but last as long as the famine continued in the land.

The widow saw that Elijah was a prophet of GOD. So she believed his words, and did as he had said. She had no need any more to worry about food. She found GOD's Word true, and she and her son and Elijah lived on that little meal and oil for more than two years.

But after Elijah had been with her some time, a very sad thing happened. The poor widow had only one son. We do not know just how old he was, but he was only a boy, for she was able to lift him in her arms.

This boy fell very sick, and he was so sick that we are told "there was no breath left in him." That means that he died. We cannot live without breath. So the poor boy was dead. When the poor mother saw this she was very, very sorrowful, and she wondered why it had happened. She had

taken GOD's prophet into the house, and GOD had taken care of them through the famine, and she had supposed no harm could happen to them while the prophet was there. Yet her child was dead.

Then she began to think of herself and her own life to see if she could find a reason for it, and she remembered some great sin. We are not told what the sin was, but it was one that troubled her a great deal; it must have been something very bad. When she thought of it, she thought that perhaps this was why GOD had taken her child away. While all was going well she might forget her sin. So, to remind her of it and make her sorry, GOD had brought this trouble on her. I am not sure that this was so, but this is how she felt. It is a good thing for us all to be sometimes reminded of our past sins, that we may be quite sure we repent, and may think more of the goodness of GOD, Who forgives them.

All this happened when Elijah was out. When he came home, the poor mother went to him and said, "Oh, thou man of GOD, art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?"

He did not answer her, except to say, "Give me thy son." The poor woman was still carrying her child in her arms, as if the warmth of her own bosom might bring him back to life. Elijah took him from her, and carried him up into his own room and laid him on his own bed, and then he stood by him and prayed. You will see them in your picture. How quiet and still the little boy lies!

Elijah prayed very earnestly to GOD, and then he stretched himself out upon the child. Again he prayed, and again he stretched himself upon the little body. Three times he did this, asking that the child's soul might come into him again; and GOD heard his prayer, and the child's soul returned, and he revived and came to life again. And Elijah carried him down and gave him back to his mother.

How glad that mother was to get her child back! She had received Elijah before and fed him because she thought he was a prophet, a servant of GOD, but now she was more sure of it than ever; none but a man of GOD could have brought her son back to life. And she was ready to believe every word he said, because GOD had heard his prayer, and had given him this wonderful power to raise the dead.

This is a good story to think of in Eastertide, when the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST is still in our minds, and our Easter decorations are still in the church.

Of course, it makes us think of our Lord's Resurrection. But I am sure you will all see at once a great difference.

JESUS CHRIST is GOD, and He came back from the dead by His own power. It is only the power of GOD that can raise the dead.

The little boy was raised by Elijah, and yet Elijah had not in himself the power of GOD; he

was not GOD. How, then, was it done? GOD worked through Elijah. Elijah was GOD'S servant, and when he prayed, GOD worked through him and raised the dead child at Elijah's word.

Others were raised in the same way. Elisha, the great prophet who came next after Elijah, raised the dead, and so did the Apostles of JESUS CHRIST. But they had no power to do these things of themselves. GOD gave them His own power; or perhaps it is better to say GOD used them as His instruments, and what they did, He really did through them.

If we remember this, it will help us to understand better something we have been thinking a good deal about in our lessons since Easter Day. I mean our Baptism.

We have learnt that when we were baptized we were raised from the dead. We were made members of CHRIST, Who has risen, and we received spiritual life from Him.

This was a real resurrection, though not exactly like that of the little boy we have been thinking of. His body was dead, but before we were baptized it was not our bodies, but our souls that were dead; they were dead in sin. We were raised, not from a natural, but from a spiritual death, that we might live a spiritual life.

But how was this done?

Think again of the little boy. The man of GOD took him up in his arms and carried him away, and then prayed over him, and GOD gave his soul

back. And the man of GOD—that is, the priest of the Church—took you up in his arms and prayed over you, and GOD gave your souls life again.

It was not Elijah who raised the little boy by his own power, nor is it the power of the priest that raises you. The widow did not see GOD, but GOD used Elijah. We do not see GOD, but GOD uses the priest to do His work, to raise the souls of little children from the dead by the waters of Baptism.

It is quite true to say Elijah raised the widow's son, and it is quite true to say that the priest baptized you and gave you spiritual life, but neither did it in their own power. GOD worked through them.

We should think of this whenever we see a Baptism. We see the priest, and we see him lift up the little child, but we do not see GOD. Yet GOD is there, and when we hear the voice of the priest saying, "I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," we know that it is the voice of GOD speaking through His priest, and that GOD is raising that little one from a death of sin, and giving it spiritual life in JESUS CHRIST.

Two Sundays ago we thought of JESUS and His Apostles, and of the blessings that would come to the world through the work they would do for Him. This is the great work—to raise dead souls to life.

They were to go into all the world baptizing in His Name. What they did He would do in them; they would carry the life of GOD wherever they went.

And so in other Sacraments. When, after our Baptism, sin comes back into the soul, and we grieve over it and want to have it taken away, and our life made new again, to whom can we go? We go to GOD, and GOD bids us kneel before His priest and tell our sin and sorrow. The priest hears in GOD'S name, and when he speaks the words, "I absolve thee," GOD works through His priest—our sins are put away, and GOD'S life renewed in our souls.

Again, lest our life should grow weak, GOD has given us spiritual food. He has bidden us receive the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of CHRIST. We go to the church, and we hear the voice of the priest as He blesses the Bread and Wine, and as he tells us to take the Body of JESUS CHRIST, which is given for us, and we know that GOD speaks in the priest. It is GOD Who blesses, GOD Who feeds His people with food for the life of their souls.

So the power that comes from the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST remains in His Church until the end of time.

How thankful we must be for our Church, and for the Baptism GOD gives us by His priests!

Not long ago a poor mother was dying. I went to give her the Blessed Sacrament, that she might have comfort and help to meet her death. How

grateful she was! Then, standing by her bedside, I baptized her little child. How eagerly her eyes watched me! how she listened to every word I said! As I laid the little one down on a pillow beside her, she looked up with oh! such a sweet smile—"I thank you, sir; I have nothing to trouble me now."

She was grateful for the comfort given to herself, but more grateful still for the life GOD had given to her little child. And she felt that, though she was going away to Paradise, she could leave the baby behind, sure that GOD would take care of the child, into whose soul He had then given His Resurrection-life. She had nothing to trouble her.

Children, will you not try to think a good deal of your Baptism. How glad the widow's little boy must have been, when he waked up quite well and strong, and could run and play as he did before! He would never forget that day.

We keep our birthdays. Let us keep our Baptism-day too. If we are glad we are born into GOD's bright world here, how much more glad we should be that we are raised from death, and born into GOD's brighter, GOD's spiritual world, His Kingdom of Heaven.

"The pure and bright baptismal flood
Entombs our nature's stain;
New creatures from the cleansing wave,
With CHRIST we rise again."

THE DEAD MAN IN ELISHA'S SEPULCHRE.

The Fourth Sunday after Easter.

THE DEAD MAN RAISED BY ELISHA'S BONES: AND OUR LIFE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST.

2 KINGS xiii. 20–21. S. JOHN vi. 53–56.

THE story we have to-day is a wonderful one, more wonderful, I think, even than that of last Sunday.

It was Elijah who raised from the dead the son of the widow of Zarephath. Before he was taken away into Heaven, GOD told him to appoint another prophet to take his place. I will tell you more of this another day.

This prophet's name was Elisha. He too was a great man, though very different from Elijah, and he did many wonderful things. Among others, he restored a little boy to life in very much the same way as Elijah did. But I am not going to talk to you of this to-day.

When Elisha had done all the work GOD had for him to do here, he died. Great prophet as he was, he could not avoid death. The king of Israel came to see him when he was dying, for he thought very much of the prophet, by whom GOD had done great things for his people. I have no doubt Elisha had a great and grand funeral, and that the king

and all the nobles of the land were there. So he died and was buried.

During the years in which Elijah and Elisha lived, and a great many years before and after them, the Children of Israel had many enemies. These enemies used to come with soldiers and steal their flocks and herds, and sometimes they would kill the people and burn down their houses and towns. It was through their own fault that the Children of Israel had this trouble, for when they first came into the Holy Land which He had given them, GOD told them to destroy all the people of the land, who were idolaters and very wicked. They did not do so, and so they always had enemies. Disobedience, even if it is only from laziness, is sure to bring trouble afterwards.

At the beginning of the next year after Elisha died, a band of these enemies called Moabites came into the land to rob and kill.

It happened that just at this time and place a man had died—we are not told his name—and the people were going to his burial. They were going slowly along, carrying the body on a bier, the mourners crying aloud as they went, and they were coming near to the burying-ground. On their way they had to pass Elisha's grave. Perhaps it was a tomb cut in the side of a hill, or it may have been a cave, such as our Lord was afterwards buried in.

Just as they came here, they saw the company of

Moabites coming towards them. How frightened they were! They wanted to run away, but how could they? They had this dead man with them. They knew the Moabites would not respect a funeral. If they stayed, they would be killed; if they ran away and left the dead body, it would be insulted. What could they do?

Elisha's sepulchre was close at hand, and one said, "Let us put the body in here; we can come back and bury it another time." This was a good thought, and at once they did so.

Now came the wonderful thing. As soon as the dead body of the man touched the bones of Elisha lying in the tomb, the man came to life again, and stood up on his feet.

Oh, how surprised they were! This is what our picture shows us. In the middle is the open tomb, before it is the bier, and around it the men lifting up their hands in astonishment at what they see. For there in the tomb itself is the man rising up on his feet, looking terrified as well as astonished, when he wakes and finds himself in such a place as that.

Did any one ever hear of such a wonderful thing? It was very wonderful for GOD to keep Jonah alive under the water so long. It was very wonderful that Elijah could bring the widow's son to life again. But to think that a man whose body had merely touched the dead body of a prophet should come to life again! No, we have never heard such a thing as this before!

Of course, Elisha had nothing to do with this. It was all GOD'S doing. So, wonderful as it is, we can easily believe that it is true; for GOD can do all things. He could use the prayer and touch of Elijah for the widow's son, and He could use and did use the dead body of His servant, the prophet Elisha, to raise this poor man from the dead. GOD is very great.

It is a good thing always to remember the power of GOD, and the resurrection of the dead.

I have to-day been to the funeral of a little child, one of the children of our Sunday school. We have laid her body away in the burying-ground, and the earth is spread over her. But her soul is not there; her soul is gone to Paradise, not to Heaven, as some people say. By-and-by her soul will come back to the body, and she will rise again, and then with both soul and body she will go to Heaven, for she is a very good child. While she waits for this, and her body is lying in the ground, her mother has the comfort that Eastertide brings. She knows that her child will rise from the dead, and on the great resurrection-day she will meet her little girl again. If we could have our choice, I suppose we would all like to die in Eastertide. It would take away some of the pain, for it would help us to look forward to the Resurrection.

But now let me tell you a little more about a resurrection I have already spoken of to you, and

this is the last time I shall be able to speak of it in this book—the resurrection that GOD gives us when He gives us spiritual life in our Baptism. You must not think it strange I say so much of this. It is so very important; all our happiness depends on it.

It is GOD Who gives us this life, but He does not give it by breathing it into us, or by pouring it into our bodies.

JESUS CHRIST, the eternal Son of GOD, came into the world that He might bring this life to men. When He came He took a human body like ours. Now, when we are baptized we are made members of that Body; that is, we become part of it. You know that a little twig can be grafted into a tree; when you are in the country where apples grow, ask some gentleman who has an orchard, or some gardener, to show you how this is done. When the twig has been grafted it becomes a part of the tree and grows in it, and gets all its life from the tree.

When we are baptized we are grafted into CHRIST'S Body, we become a part of Him; St. Paul says, "We are members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones." Because we are so made members or part of CHRIST, we have His life. CHRIST has risen; it is the life of the risen that He gives us, so in Him we are raised from the dead.

GOD, through the touch of the dead body of Elisha, gave to the man of whom we have heard the life of this world. GOD, by the touch of the

risen, spiritual Body of JESUS CHRIST, gives our souls risen, spiritual life.

You see that the one is a type of the other; there is a likeness, but there is also a great difference.

Let me show you some of the difference. The man touched the bones of Elisha, and came to life again. He got up and walked away. But that did not prevent him dying again. If the Moabites had overtaken him and killed him, he would have died at once, and then his body would have decayed away and passed into dust, until the day of the great resurrection.

But the life that JESUS gives does not pass away. We touch Him and are made His members, and that membership remains with us; wherever we are we are members of the Body of CHRIST.

Think again of another difference. It was only the outside of the man's body that touched the bones of Elisha. But JESUS does not simply put His hand on us and touch us, or let us put out our hand and touch Him. He comes to dwell in us. He fills every part of us. I can say that His Mind fills my mind, as His Body fills my body. My eyes, my hands, my feet, are the eyes, the hands, the feet of CHRIST; He fills all parts of my nature; He fills them all when He gives me life.

Now, that is beautiful to think of. And it helps us to learn how to take care of our bodies and minds as well as our souls. We are to keep them

all from sin because JESUS has raised them all and joined them to Himself. I must not let my soul love things that are wrong, because of the Soul of JESUS CHRIST. I must not let my mind think on things that are wrong, because of the Mind of JESUS CHRIST. I must not let my body do things that are wrong, because of the Body of JESUS CHRIST.

What bad thoughts come into the mind—thoughts that are not kind, not good—thoughts that are not pure, not modest! How we ought to drive them away by thinking of the thoughts of CHRIST! How can we do wrong with our bodies, either alone or with others, if we remember the Body of CHRIST? How can we let ourselves love what GOD does not wish us to love, if we keep our souls loving only those things which the Soul of JESUS CHRIST loved. Indeed, children, nothing will help you more, and keep you more free from sin in soul and mind and body, than to always think of CHRIST Who made you one with Himself when in your Baptism He touched you and raised you from the dead.

You can think of the same, too, at other times in your life. We know that unless we receive the Holy Communion we shall lose all the life our souls have had. Why is this? It is because in the Holy Communion we receive the Body of CHRIST.

Did you ever see a fire that had got very low? the coals looked quite black, and you would have thought it was quite out except for the little smoke

that was coming up. And then some one brought very carefully from another fire a hot, live, glowing coal, and put it into the dull fire. For a little time the hot coal seemed to be lost, but as you watched you saw a little more smoke, and then a glow began to come, and in a short time the whole black mass was glowing, and the fire burning brightly; it had been kindled anew by the hot coal brought to it.

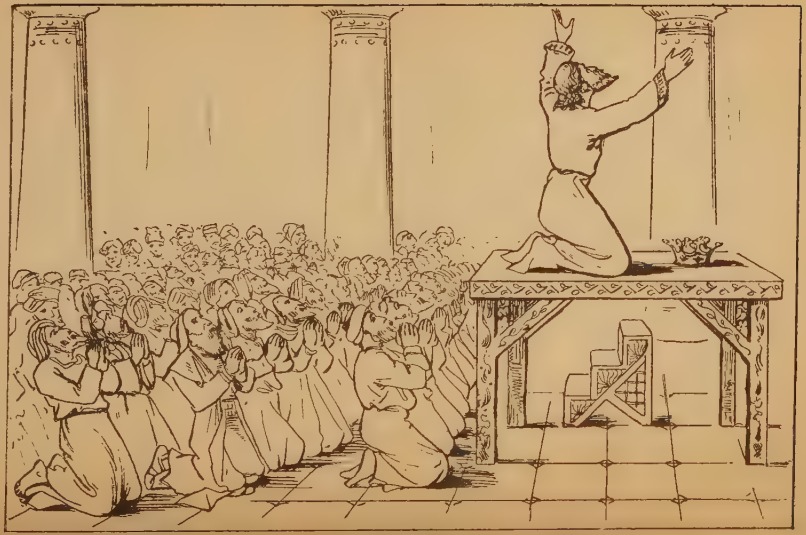
Sometimes our lives get like that; they get dull and cold—we don't seem to have any real life in us. Then we must think of the Body of CHRIST. He is in us because we are baptized, but if we do not feel the warmth of that we go to Holy Communion, and He gives us His Body again—a glowing coal, as it were, to make our whole nature bright and warm and full of life in Him. This is why JESUS said, "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the Blood of the Son of man, ye have no life in you."

Remember the life given you by the Body of CHRIST. Be very careful and very earnest in your communions, that the Body of CHRIST may keep you alive.

In this way you will know, as you grow up, more and more what we mean when we say that we are raised up in CHRIST JESUS. And you will be able to look forward with great hope and joy to the great resurrection, when you will see the Body of CHRIST in all its glory, and be thankful that you are not only looking at Him and worshipping Him from a long way off, but you have been made one

with Him ; your real and true life is in Him, your GOD and King.

"Thrice blest if, through the gate of death,
Glorious at last and free,
We to our joyful rising pass,
O risen Lord, with Thee."



SOLOMON DEDICATING THE TEMPLE.

Rogation Sunday.

KING SOLOMON'S PRAYER: AND JESUS CHRIST PROMISING TO HEAR HIS CHILDREN.

2 CHRONICLES vi. 12–20; S. JOHN xvi. 23–27.

WE have come now to the last Sunday in Eastertide, a Sunday which has a name of its own, instead of being called simply the Fifth Sunday after Easter.

We call to-day Rogation Sunday, and the first three days of this week Rogation Days.

The word "rogation" means "asking." On these "asking days" we are to think especially about prayer. You all know that Thursday is Holy Thursday, Ascension Day—the day on which JESUS CHRIST our King went up to take possession of His kingdom, to sit upon His royal throne. If the disciples of JESUS knew that He was going away from them, they must have had a great deal to ask Him for, and many things they wished to ask Him about. There are other reasons why they are called Rogation Days, but this is enough for us, children. Think of the disciples gathering round JESUS CHRIST, telling all their wants, and asking His help.

To-day, then, we must learn something about

prayer. We will think about one of the greatest and best prayers that was ever made.

You all know who Solomon was. We have had two lessons about him in our book already. He was the son of King David. When David died, Solomon was the son whom GOD appointed to succeed his father on the throne of Israel.

Solomon was the greatest king that ever reigned over Israel; indeed, he was one of the greatest kings the world has ever seen. There were many great things that Solomon did, but the greatest and grandest of all was to build a beautiful temple for the worship of Almighty GOD.

Before his time, the only place in which to worship GOD that the Children of Israel had was the tent, or tabernacle, which Moses had made for them in the wilderness. This was very small, and made so that it could be easily taken down and carried from place to place. It was not really worthy of the worship of Almighty GOD, though it was as beautiful as they had been able to make it in the wilderness.

King David wished for a long time that he could build a temple, and he collected a great deal of gold and silver, which he left to Solomon, that he might have something to begin with.

The Temple that Solomon built was very beautiful—perhaps the most beautiful building that ever was made. It was built of hewn stone, and finished with costly wood, most skilfully carved, and it was

covered inside with plates of gold. It would take too long for me to describe it to you now. You can read an account of it in the third and fourth chapters of the Second Book of the Chronicles.

After the Temple was built, it was given to GOD, or dedicated, as we say, with magnificent ceremonies. Thousands of bullocks and sheep were offered in sacrifice, and the Feast of Dedication was kept for seven days. Besides the sacrifices in the Temple, there were great rejoicings among the people and great feastings every day, and after the feast, all went home, praising GOD for His glory and the favour He had showed their king.

Now let me tell you about Solomon's prayer.

Of course, Solomon could not offer the sacrifices himself, for he was not a priest, nor could he go into the Temple itself. He could only come into the court of the Temple, where all the men were allowed to come in and worship.

Here, in this court, he had a small scaffold of brass put up, about five feet high, and at the time of the offering of the sacrifice, he kneeled down on this scaffold, or platform, in the sight of all the people, and spread out his hands before GOD, and made his prayer to Him.

He began his prayer by saying that he knew well that the Temple he had built, however much he had spent upon it, was not really worthy of the honour of GOD. Yet he hoped that GOD would accept it, and hear the prayers offered to Him there.

He prayed that if the people quarrelled among themselves, they might be reconciled when they came together into the Temple. That if they were afflicted by enemies because of their sins, and came there to ask pardon and help, it might be given. He asked that if there were a famine or any plague, such as locusts or caterpillars, in the land, and the people came to the Temple to offer sacrifice, that then the plague might be taken away. He asked, too, that any stranger praying in the Temple might be heard. Then, knowing that the Children of Israel were very ready to sin, and might be taken captives into another land, he asked that if this happened, and if in that other land they thought of GOD'S Temple and prayed to Him, that GOD would forgive their sins and bring them back again to their own land.

It was indeed a very beautiful prayer, and it was all for the people and for the glory of GOD. Solomon asked nothing for himself.

In our picture he seems to have taken his crown off and laid it down, as if he did not wish to come before GOD as king, but rather as one of the people, begging GOD'S favour for the whole nation.

When Solomon had finished his prayer, and the sacrifices were offered, a wonderful thing happened. Fire came down from Heaven and consumed the offerings and burnt sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house. There was such a bright and glorious cloud over and in the house, that the priests themselves could not for a time go in.

By this bright cloud GOD showed that He accepted the Temple, and would make it His dwelling-place.

He did more than this, too. He came to Solomon by night, and told him that He had accepted the house to be His Temple; that He would put His Name there, and would hear every prayer that was offered in it, so long as the people were true and faithful to Him.

Now, this beautiful prayer that Solomon offered teaches us a great deal about prayer. I hope you will all read it thoughtfully—2 Chron. vi. 12–42.

You know quite well that what the Temple was to the Jews the Church is to us. I mean our church building, where we come to worship GOD and offer our sacrifices to Him. The church is our temple. It is quite true that your church may not be beautiful to look at; it may be very mean and poor, very small, with no gold or decorations in it, yet it is a temple. In it there is the altar of GOD, and in it the priest ought to be found every day, standing to offer the Memorial Sacrifice of the Death of JESUS CHRIST. We do not see any brightness to tell us that GOD is there; but we know that, though we do not see Him, our Lord JESUS CHRIST offers Himself on our altars to the Father.

All prayer that we can offer to Almighty GOD is only accepted by Him because JESUS CHRIST died to offer a Sacrifice for us, and our prayers go up

with that Sacrifice to GOD, and are pleasing to Him.

If, then, we have that Sacrifice to plead in our church, that must be the place to which to go to pray.

So we can follow the example of Solomon the king.

We can go to church at the time when the sacrifice is offered, and kneel down—I suppose all the children who read this book do kneel when they are in church—and, kneeling before GOD, ask Him to accept our prayers for JESUS CHRIST'S sake.

And we can pray for the very same things that Solomon did.

If two children have had a quarrel, and they both go to the same church, and they both pray about it, don't you think GOD will soon help them to make it up?

If you have ever done wrong, and feel very sorry for it, can you find a better place than the corner of the church, into which to creep quietly and tell GOD all about it, and ask His forgiveness.

If you had a great trouble, some one was sick at home, or there was no food, or some one had hurt you, you could not do better than go to church: and if, while you were there, you could not help the tears coming, I don't think GOD would be angry with a little child who cried in His house, if that child tried to pray too.

Then it might happen that you were in a strange

place. If only you could find GOD's church, you will be no longer strange. Some while ago I knew an English family, father and mother, and four tall boys and girls, who left England to go to America. They got to Boston, and found all so strange. They could not feel happy, and the girls cried and wanted to go back. On Sunday morning they inquired for an Episcopal Church, for that is what the Church of England is called in the United States, and when they got to the church door they met the clergyman going in. They told him all their trouble, and added, "If the church is strange to us, what shall we do?" After service he went to them, and found them all smiling. "It's all right now; it's just like being at home."

But if you were in a place where there was no church, still you could do as Solomon said. You could think of the church and pray. Perhaps in the summer-time you go away to the sea, or into the country, and the church is miles away. Now, if on Sunday morning early, at the time when you know your priest at home is standing at the altar, you were to take your Prayer-book and read part of the Communion Service, and ask that the Sacrifice he was offering in the church might be accepted for you, and that JESUS, Who was present in His church, would feed and strengthen your soul, don't you think you would feel that the church meant something to you? Indeed, you might be quite certain that such a prayer was heard.

You could pray in this way not only in the

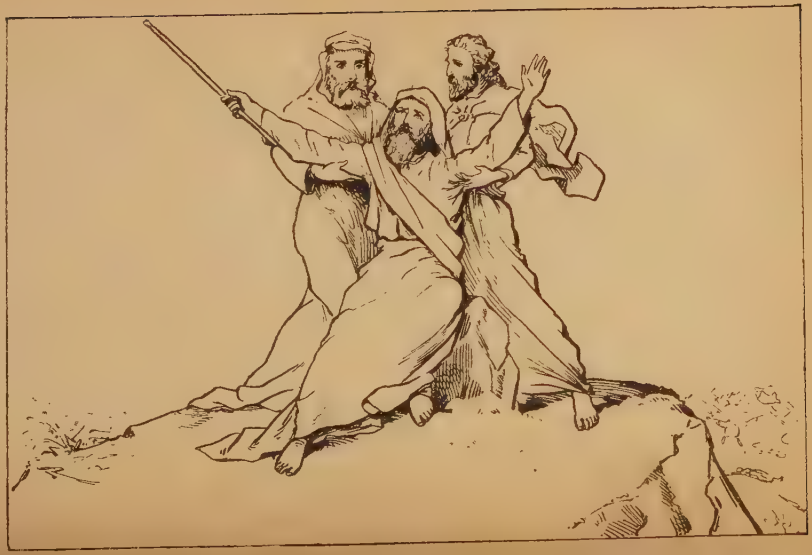
summer, or when you were far away from a church, but on any Sunday when, because of sickness or work, or for any other reason, you could not go to church. Solomon's prayer was a very good one, and we should be wise to do as he said.

I know a lady who was sick for a very long time, and could never or very seldom go to church. She loved the church, and often wished she could be there. And then she thought of doing the very thing I have just told you about. She took a little book and wrote in it some of the church prayers, and put in some hymns and other prayers as well. This little book she used on Sundays when she could not go out, and it was such a happiness to her to feel that, though she could not be in church with her body, she was there in spirit, and had a spiritual share in the Sacrifice the priest offered, and the Communion the people received. Afterwards her little book was printed, and a great many people who were prevented from going to church have found comfort in it.

We can learn something, too, from King Solomon about the best time to go to church. He prayed when the sacrifice was offered. This is when we should pray too. It is a good thing to go to a children's service in the afternoon, or to a Catechizing; it is a good thing to go to Morning or Evening Prayer with your parents, if they wish you to do so. But the hour of Sacrifice is better than these. Try and go when the Holy Eucharist is offered. Perhaps it is offered at half-past seven

in the morning. Well, it won't hurt you to jump up early and dress quickly and go to church then, and run home in time for breakfast. Perhaps you attend some church where there is a children's Eucharist at nine or half-past nine. If you understand what a great thing the Sacrifice is, you would never want to be absent from the children's Eucharist.

Never forget this lesson, and whenever you are in sorrow, or need, or any trouble, be sure you pray about it, and if you possibly can go to GOD'S house, and tell Him the whole story, and be very certain He will hear you and answer your prayer in some way. You will not see fire come down from Heaven; you will not see the brightness of GOD'S Presence actually filling the church or the place where you are praying; but as GOD came to Solomon by night and told him his prayer was heard, so GOD the Holy Spirit will whisper in your heart, telling you that God is pleased with you—that His eye is always on you, and His Heart loves you for ever.



MOSES PRAYING ON THE MOUNT.

Expectation Sunday.

MOSES PRAYING FOR ISRAEL FIGHTING: AND JESUS INTERCEDING IN HEAVEN.

EXOD. xvii. 9–13. ROM. vii. 31–37.

TO-DAY we will go back to the story of the Children of Israel, long before the days of King Solomon.

You remember now how wonderfully GOD took care of them while they were in the land of Egypt, and how He sent Moses to deliver them out of the land. The story of to-day begins just after they were brought safely out of Egypt, and delivered from their enemies.

At first all seemed to go on well with them, and they could see in everything that happened to them that GOD was watching over and taking care of them. Thus when they came to the Red Sea, and had no ships in which to cross over and escape from the Egyptian soldiers, who were following them, GOD divided the waters of the sea so that they were able to walk through safely on dry land. After they were past this, the first well of water they came to was so bitter that they could not drink it, and GOD made it sweet for them. Then

they were hungry and without food in the wilderness, and GOD brought great flocks of quails, birds very good to eat, for them! and afterwards He sent them, from Heaven, a food called manna. This He gave them every morning as long as they were in the wilderness, forty whole years. Then as they went along they came to a place where there was no water at all, and GOD told Moses to strike the rock in Mount Horeb, and when he did so streams of beautiful water flowed out, enough for all their wants. So you see that they very soon knew that GOD had not only brought them out of Egypt, but was going to take care of them on their way to the new country He had promised to give them.

But now a new trouble came, worse than all before.

Just as they had got their food and water, and might hope that their worst troubles were over, a tribe of fierce people came and wanted to fight against them. I suppose they wanted chiefly to drive the Children of Israel away from the beautiful stream of water and get it for themselves, for streams and springs of fresh water are very precious in hot countries, especially in the deserts. Perhaps, when they saw all the flocks and herds that had come out of Egypt, they wanted to get them, or they may have been afraid that the Children of Israel would take their land with all its pastures and fields. So they came out to fight. These people were called Amalekites, because they were descended from a

man called Amalek, and they were a very fierce and strong people.

Now, I said this was the worst trouble of all, and so it was, for the Children of Israel knew nothing about fighting. They had been slaves for several generations, more than two hundred years, and all their time had been spent in making bricks and in building; they knew nothing about war, and they had no weapons. Yet they had to fight, for the soldiers of the Amalekites had come and put themselves right before them, and were only waiting for the daylight that they might begin the battle. What a disappointment this must have been to the people just at the time when they hoped all was well, and they were going to march on their way in peace! They must have felt that they would rather have died over their bricks than be killed here in the desert.

But Moses was quite sure GOD would not forsake them.

He called Joshua, a man whom he knew he could depend on—you have already learnt something about him—and told him to go and pick out all the men he thought would be the best men to fight, and give them such weapons as he could get together, and be ready to fight in the morning. Joshua may have wondered what Moses expected him to do, but still he obeyed him, and early in the morning he went out to fight.

How anxious the people must have been when they saw this little band of men, knowing so little

about war, going out to battle with the fierce men of Amalek! How the mothers must have clasped their little children to their breasts, and gathered their daughters round them, praying that GOD would help the men to fight bravely and to overcome!

But where was Moses? He had gone away with his brothers. Did they think it strange, I wonder, when they saw the three men whom they most of all looked up to going away up into a mountain? Where were they going? Were they going to watch the battle from a distance, and have a safe way of escape if Joshua and his men were beaten? Oh no; this would not have been like Moses.

No; Moses went up into a mountain, and there he did more for the people than all those who were fighting.

He stood on the top of the mount with the rod in his hand with which he had done so many wonderful things in Egypt. There he spread out both his hands before GOD, and prayed for the people. This was the real power that won the battle. All day long Moses stood with his arms spread out, and GOD heard his prayer and gave the Children of Israel the victory. Sometimes it seemed as if Amalek was gaining; this was when Moses was tired and let his hand down. Then he raised them again, and the Children of Israel were stronger.

> "When Moses stood with arms spread wide,
> Success was found on Israel's side;
> But when through weariness they failed,
> That moment Amalek prevailed."

So it went on all day, until, when night came, the Amalekites were quite overcome; they were driven back, and went away and left Israel in peace.

Moses had not been alone in this long day and wonderful prayer. Aaron and Hur were with him, and they took part in it. Think how tired Moses must have got; you could not stand with your arms up for half an hour, but he stood all day. When his brothers saw how tired he was, they got a great stone, and he rested against that, and then each took one of his arms and held them up. So they all stood bravely together the whole weary day. If you look now at our picture you will see them. Moses looks tired out, yet his face is turned up to GOD, and he seems to have all his thoughts gathered up in one great prayer. How earnest Aaron and Hur seem! They must do their part. Moses shall not fail, the Children of Israel shall not be overcome, if they can help it.

So the battle was won by the power of GOD in answer to the prayer of Moses.

I think you will understand this story almost without a word from me.

Last Sunday we talked about our Blessed Lord going away from His disciples. Last Thursday was the day on which He went away. We call last Thursday ASCENSION DAY, because on that day He ascended into Heaven.

Now, why did JESUS CHRIST go up into Heaven? Was it that He was tired of this world? Did He

want to escape from the continual fighting against temptation and sin? It would not be like our dear Lord and King to go for any such reasons as those.

No; He went for the very same reason for which Moses went up into the mountain. Moses went to pray for those who fought, and JESUS CHRIST at the right hand of GOD is interceding—that is, pleading or praying—for His people. He has not simply gone there to sit and be at rest in His own joy. He still thinks of and helps those He has left here.

This is one reason why to-day is called EXPECTATION SUNDAY. Before He went up JESUS promised His disciples that they should receive "power from on high," that they might do the work He gave them to do. When He was gone, they went to Jerusalem and waited as He told them, expecting this power that was to come. And we too are expecting power and gifts from JESUS our Saviour and King, so as it was to them it is to us, Expectation Sunday.

What is this power for? It is that we may fight. Christian children, when you were baptized you were signed with the sign of the Cross, "In token that you should not be ashamed to confess the faith of CHRIST crucified, and *manfully to fight* under His banner (the Cross) against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue CHRIST'S faithful soldiers and servants unto your life's end."

This is your duty, and here is your help.

The fight may be all in your own heart, to over-

come some temptation to anger, falsehood, or evil thoughts. Or it may be against some temptation that comes from outside, from bad children, or bad men and women, who want to make you like themselves. And it may be very hard to fight, very hard always to do the right thing.

Now, remember, when you fight, to look up to Heaven. JESUS CHRIST in Heaven spreads out His arms for you. He offers in Heaven the sacrifice He offered on the Cross. "He ever liveth to make intercession" for you.

> "Still for us He intercedes;
> His prevailing death He pleads.
> Alleluia!"

You are to think of the perfect example that JESUS set you in His life on earth as the Boy and Carpenter at Nazareth. You are to be very thankful for His Death on the Cross, by which He takes away sin. But you must not think only of these things. More than all you most remember that He Who lived and died is living now in Heaven, pleading for you, and sending you courage and strength to fight for Him on earth. Will you not really try to be brave soldiers and servants, worthy of JESUS CHRIST, your Saviour and your King?

You can have no idea until you really try, what a wonderful help it is to think of and look up to JESUS in Heaven. Perhaps you may be all alone when you are trying to do right. Remember: He sees! Perhaps there may be so many temptations round

you that you get confused, you can scarcely think at all. Yet His eye is resting on you; no one can hide you from Him. You might be tormented with so many evil thoughts, that it might seem impossible for you to pray at all, or you might be very sick and not able to pray; what a happiness to think, "Well, if I cannot pray, JESUS is praying in Heaven, and GOD will hear that prayer"! Some very little child might want to pray, and not know any words to say. It might be a very good prayer to ask GOD to be pleased to make him all that JESUS wants him to be. And if you have so much work to do, so many errands to run that you have not time to pray as long as you want, you can think, "JESUS never has too much to do; He ever liveth to make intercession for me." These things may make you very happy.

Then, may we not learn something from Aaron and Hur taking part in the prayer of Moses? Have not we any way of sharing in the intercession of JESUS CHRIST?

Every time we pray for others, we do this. But we do it especially when we take part in the Church's Sacrifice. You remember well, I am sure, that in the Sacrifice on our altars, the Church has her share in the Sacrifice of JESUS at the right hand of GOD. But this is not for grown-up people only, it is not only for those who have great sins to confess, and who want to plead Christ's Sacrifice that they may be pardoned: it is for children too.

How beautiful to think that children who love to gather round the altar where JESUS pleads are like little brothers and sisters of JESUS CHRIST staying up His hands while He is interceding! So they have a share in His prayer. JESUS is very good to His dear children. He not only helps them when they fight for Him, but He lets them take part in His work for others who are fighting too. Let us try and help in His work and prayer now, and so learn to know more of the love of JESUS, the Children's King.

"Interceding for us
In that blessed place,
Calling us to Glory,
Sending us His Grace.
His bright home preparing
Faithful ones, for you,
JESUS ever liveth,
Ever loveth too."

ELIJAH ANOINTS ELISHA.

Whitsunday.

THE ANOINTING OF ELISHA: AND THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

1 KINGS xix. 15–21. S. JOHN xiv. 5–15.

WE come to-day to our last Old Testament story. The lesson which we shall learn is a very great one, a lesson about something which is the very life and glory of the Kingdom of the Children's King.

We will go back to the story of one of GOD'S greatest prophets.

We do not know very much about him; no one knows who his father and mother were, nor where he was born, nor whether he had any brothers and sisters. But there are some great and wonderful things told us about his life and work.

When the Children of Israel had forsaken GOD and were worshipping false gods, GOD sent a famine into the land, partly to punish them, and partly to make them think of Him and repent of their sins. It was this prophet whom GOD chose to carry the message to the people.

When the famine had lasted three years, GOD sent the same prophet to call the king and all the people together that they might offer a sacrifice to Him. The prophet prayed, and GOD sent fire from Heaven to burn up the sacrifice; and then,

when the people bowed down and worshipped Him, He sent them rain and brought the famine to an end.

We have already had one story out of the life of this prophet. We learnt on the Third Sunday in Lent how GOD fed him in the Wilderness with food sent by an Angel.

Another story, on the Third Sunday after Easter, was more wonderful still.

But perhaps the most wonderful thing of all was the end of his life. He never died. When his work here was done, and GOD wanted him in His other world, He sent a chariot and horses of fire to fetch him. What a glorious end that was! GOD'S own chariot, the holy Angels, came and carried him away we know not where. At the end of the world we shall see him.

Once indeed he has been back to this world. When JESUS CHRIST was transfigured on a mountain and showed His kingly glory, this prophet was brought back to be there with Him. That was a great honour as well as a most wonderful thing.

You all know this great prophet, ELIJAH. Of all the great men who lived in Old Testament days I do not think of any better worth knowing about and remembering than he; never was there a better servant of GOD, a better prophet of JESUS CHRIST, the Children's King.

We shall end our lessons with one more story about him.

When the time came for him to leave this world, Almighty GOD told him he was to appoint another man to be a prophet, and to take his place. GOD told him where to go and who to choose.

He went to a place called Abelmeholah, and there he found Elisha, the son of Shaphat, ploughing in his father's fields. He was the son of a rich man, rich enough to have eleven men ploughing for him, each with a separate yoke of oxen. Elisha, though rich, was not ashamed to work, so he had the twelfth yoke of oxen, and ploughed with the servants.

Elijah passed by and threw his mantle, a kind of cloak, upon Elisha. Elisha knew Elijah, and he understood quite well what this meant. It meant that he was to leave his father and mother and all that he had, and go after Elijah and become a prophet of GOD as he was. And he obeyed. He killed two oxen and made a feast for all the servants, and then bid his father and mother and all his friends good-bye, and gave all up and went after Elijah to minister to him and learn from him.

This was a great thing for Elisha to do, and GOD was pleased and accepted him, but it did not make him a prophet. Something more was needed.

I think our picture will tell us what that was.

Elijah and Elisha seem to have come to a lonely place, where only GOD was near. Elijah stands up, wearing the rough hairy garment of a

prophet; Elisha kneels before him in his ordinary dress.

Elijah is looking up to GOD, with one hand uplifted as in prayer; with the other hand he is pouring from a little cruse something on the head of Elisha. What is he doing?

He is anointing him with oil.

In olden times three classes of men were anointed with oil, to show that they were set apart to fill certain offices. These were prophets, priests, and kings. Kings and queens are still anointed when they are crowned. Christian priests are not anointed with oil, but with the Holy Ghost, and that is what the ancient anointing with oil signified.

Elisha is to be a prophet, and so he is anointed with oil. This was what GOD had told Elijah to do before he was taken away. Now Elisha would be able to take his place.

Elisha never left Elijah after this. He followed him everywhere, learning all he could about the work GOD wanted him for, and watching all the works of Elijah.

When the time came for Elijah to go, he asked Elisha if there was any particular thing he could do for him. Elisha had learnt that the power of Elijah was so great because the Spirit of GOD was with him; and Elisha knew that he had himself received something of this power when he was anointed. Indeed, this was what the anointing was intended to teach him. When the oil was poured on the head of a prophet, he was to know that GOD

was pouring His Spirit upon him, that he might be wise and strong for the work to which he was called.

Elisha then knew he had the Spirit of GOD; but he knew that he himself was very weak, and, fearing lest he might fail, he said, when Elijah asked what he should do for him, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."

Elijah promised that this should be given if Elisha saw him when he went away. Oh, how close Elisha must have kept to his master then! He would not leave him for a moment. So when the chariot of fire came, Elisha was there. He saw his master go up, and cried out and rent his clothes, when he saw that Elijah was gone and he was left alone.

But Elijah did not forget his promise. Even as he went up, he dropped his mantle again upon Elisha. This time Elisha was to keep it, and as he wrapped it around him he knew that his prayer had been heard, and that a double portion of the spirit that had been in Elijah rested on him.

Others knew it too. When Elisha came back all alone, the young men of the schools of the prophets came to meet him, and when they saw him wearing Elijah's mantle, and his whole face and manner changed by that which he had seen and that which had happened to him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha." So Elisha was taken to fill Elijah's place.

Now, we cannot go further with Elisha's history

to-day. Will you try and read it for yourselves in the Second Book of Kings? We must see what this story tells us for our lesson to-day, and why it is a good one to end our book with.

To-day is a great festival of the Church, WHITSUNDAY, the Feast of GOD the Holy Ghost.

You do not forget that two Sundays ago was Rogation Sunday, when we thought of the disciples of JESUS CHRIST gathered round Him, asking for gifts before He went away.

What gift would they ask most for?

I think they must have felt that the chief thing they needed was to be like Him. They must have thought if only they could have His Spirit, if the Spirit that filled Him was in them, what a grand thing it would be for them. They knew how weak they were. They could not help knowing this, for they had all forsaken Him on Maundy Thursday night, when His enemies came and bound Him and led Him away. But they loved Him, and wanted to be strong, that they might be like Him and do His work. They must have prayed for His Spirit.

I think we may be sure that this was what they asked for, because they had heard Him speak of it. On Easter night, when He came back from the grave and met them in the upper chamber, He breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." They could not know what this meant, but they would be certain it meant something

grand and beautiful, and so they must have longed for it.

Then, too, JESUS had told them of His works, but had said to them, "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to My Father." These works they could only do by the power of the same Spirit that was in Him. So they longed for this great gift.

How close they kept to JESUS their Lord as the end came near! How earnestly they followed Him, as He went with them for the last time to the Mount of Olives! How their hearts went out after Him as they saw Him lifted up from them and carried away in a glorious cloud, away into Heaven!

And then they waited. Sometimes they would be sad to think that JESUS was gone. Then they would be glad, for He was still their Lord, though now in Heaven, and He had promised them this wonderful gift.

At last it came. On the Feast of Pentecost, that is to-day, the fiftieth day after Easter—Pentecost means fifty—the gift was given.

They were all in the upper room in Jerusalem, the same room in which JESUS gave them the Blessed Sacrament for the first time, when they heard a great sound. A mighty wind seemed to shake the house and fill the room. A glorious light appeared, dividing itself into rays, and resting on the head of each. A great joy filled all their hearts. They knew that JESUS had kept His

promise! the gift was given, the spirit of the Lord filled them all.

This is the joy of to-day, that GOD the Holy Ghost came down to fill His Church, to stay in His Church for ever, to give His Church the power to do the work of her Lord and Master JESUS CHRIST as long as the world lasts.

The Apostles were not the same after they had received the great gift. People who saw them could not help seeing the difference; they knew wherever they met them that "they had been with JESUS," and had received the Holy Ghost.

Children, we have this gift too. We cannot do just what Elisha did, nor can we do the things the Apostles did. It is not necessary that we should. If it were necessary GOD would teach us to do them. Yet we have the same gift. And there are in the Church now greater powers than Elijah ever had or ever thought of—greater gifts than were ever given to any prophet in the days of old.

They could raise dead bodies! The Holy Ghost in the Church raises dead souls and gives them new life. They could feed with food for the body; the Holy Ghost gives us spiritual food in the Sacraments JESUS has left us. They could call people back to GOD that He might forgive their sin; we have His very forgiveness given to us in the absolution His priest gives in the power of the Spirit. They felt their weakness, and prayed that

GOD would make them strong; but every little child now in the Kingdom of JESUS CHRIST is stronger than any prophet or king of old, because the Holy Ghost Himself has come by the laying on of the hands of the bishops, to dwell in his heart and remain with him for ever.

This is a good thought to finish with.

GOD who loved His people in days gone by, and did such wonderful things for them, loves His children now. He anoints them with the Holy Spirit. By this anointing they are made strong, and they are changed.

Only let the Holy Spirit lead you, let Him teach you and make you what GOD wishes you to be, and day by day you become more like JESUS CHRIST, more worthy to be called the CHILDREN OF THE CHILDREN'S KING.

THE END.

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